Re-defining Urban Space Through Performance

by

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to discourses concerned with urban space and performance practice. It identifies ways in which built environments become performative; how the built environment performs meaning(s) within the urban context and how spatial practices of contemporary performance engage with city-spaces. The programming and order of urban space tends to fix meanings; increasingly regulated and single-purpose city-spaces seem unable to react to informal or unplanned activities. However, this thesis suggests that urban space entails inherent opportunities for conceiving and practising space otherwise and looks at a spatial spectrum – from leftover spaces to London's landmarks. It analyses incomplete presences in the built environment and their unexpected (re)uses, which make urban space an arena of ideas, interaction and creativity. It examines how spatial practices of performance, such as site-specific performance, audio-walks and installations, inform our (re)thinking of space, its meaning and its re-appropriation. It argues that through performative concepts and actions, space manifests a changeable and dynamic quality, rather than motionlessness and inertia.

The thesis involves an interdisciplinary approach employing geography, urban, architectural and performance studies. It looks at four types of built spaces that have been used for performance purposes; a disused warehouse at 21 Wapping Lane, the converted power station housing the Tate Modern art gallery, the exterior of the National Theatre's building and the London district of Wapping. All of these sites are awaiting, or are undergoing, major alterations in their design or planning, involving reconstruction and expansion, or total demolition. The uncertain future of these sites and buildings, the inevitable decay of their material, and the temporality of the built environment invite questions of architectural design and urban planning in terms of performance. The examination of these sites at this moment of change and the potential impact of the redevelopment plans on city life make this research timely, since the thesis emphasises the imperative of re-defining concepts of space, planning strategies, and design processes so as to imagine a less determinate, more creative urban space.

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Declaration

I declare that the work presented in the thesis is my own and I have acknowledged all the references employed.

Signed: Date:

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Re-defining Space

1. Introduction

This thesis investigates the relationship between urban space and contemporary performance practices. Considering the complexity of the urban environment on the one hand, and the tendency of contemporary theatre performance to employ for performance purposes spaces outside the theatre building on the other hand, this research seeks to explore the ways that contemporary performance affects, inspires and modifies concepts and practices of urban space. Each of the spaces presented in this thesis tells a spatial story. Each of these spaces is a way of talking about architectural practices, of looking at concepts which govern these spaces and of examining how performative theories and practices can potentially allow for an imaginative re-shaping of built spaces.

The way that contemporary city-spaces are conceptualised, represented and used often complies with rigid rules and assumptions about what urban space means and what its function is; thus, urban space often becomes highly organised and regulated, excluding the inhabitants' desires and needs (see, for example, Hill 1998, Borden et al. 2000, and Franck and Stevens 2007). The division of urban space into zones and single-purpose spaces with defined use, as well as ambitious architectural constructions, do not encourage deviations or improvisational actions. However, the imaginative practices of inhabitants can challenge pre-defined uses of spaces, their intended use by planners and architects, and can suggest alternative ways of experiencing and producing the built environment (see, for example, Doron 2000 and Frers and Meier 2007). Unplanned activities, creative practices and temporal actions can modify the meaning of existing spaces and point towards the kind of spaces needed for the future. In this way, city-spaces come into existence through people's use and imagination, and difference and diversion becomes part of urban space; in effect, the production of urban space becomes more democratic, inasmuch as people are participants in it.

Within this context, alternative practices – such as so-called site-specific performance – can potentially challenge established concepts and practices of urban

space, whilst they expand practices, concepts and purposes of theatre, re-defining the meaning of urban space. In contemporary performance practices that use non-conventional theatre spaces, the connection between performance and the built environment of the city becomes strongly evident. City-spaces become both the 'stage' and the 'auditorium' where the audience is invited to experience the performance event, as well as the city. Performances outside designated performance spaces are able to bring into focus spaces within the city and, alongside their main theme or intention, they unavoidably contribute to make the audience – who are typically the inhabitants of the city – aware of the urban surroundings as well as the practices that appear in them. Thus, performance practices can potentially not only make apparent the link of theatre praxis with the city, but they can also contest practices of theatre, and most importantly of urban space.

Three of the four cases examined in this thesis are buildings: the disused warehouse in 21 Wapping Lane, the converted building of Tate Modern and the National Theatre's building. The other is the area of Wapping, the streets of which constitute the setting of the performance tour I examine. The selected buildings of Tate Modern and the National Theatre constitute contemporary urban landmarks of London, while the derelict warehouse in Wapping escapes categorisation between functional spaces. The proposal that comes out of this research is that a better understanding of the meaning of the built environment can be achieved through systematic examination of spaces' architectural concepts, the material qualities of their structural composition and their function within the urban context, as well as the practices emerging from them. For the purposes of this research the main focus is on performance or performative practices and their interaction with the urban space. By tracing how concepts and practices are entangled with the built environment, we can identify the parameters that affect our expectations and experience of the urban setting.

All the buildings employed await major alterations in their design, involving reconstruction and expansion, which in the case of Tate Modern has recently started, and even total demolition, as in the case of the Wapping warehouse which has already been completed. In view of the redevelopment plans of the buildings examined, the investigation of the building's location, materiality, function, and meaning within the wider context of urban space constitutes this research as timely and the significance of examining these sites is enhanced. Alongside the discussion of the present condition

and function of the building sites, the proposed changes and redevelopment plans are also investigated, in an attempt to trace the imperatives as well as the implications of those changes. Thus, by revealing the associations of the proposed plans with concepts, attitudes and ideologies concerning the use of space, this research manifests aspects of the potential impact of those changes on city life.

The performances that took place in the spaces examined within this research are *Faust* by the Punchdrunk company (2006-2007), which took place in the disused four-floor warehouse (with a basement) in Wapping Lane; the performance walk *Wapping:audio* tour, created by Matthew Ball, Katie Day and Elyssa Livergant (launched in 2005), which takes place in the area of Wapping. The converted power station, now the art space of Tate Modern, is looked at through the lens of Doris Salcedo's artwork *Shibboleth* (2007-2008). Finally, for the only edifice constructed for offering shelter to theatre performance presented in this research, the National Theatre, I examine its exterior spaces, the most exposed public spaces of the building, and their performative aspects in relation to its location within the city, its architecture and the art practices that have taken place in its outside spaces.

Through the discussion of the four case studies, the thesis seeks to analyse how the interaction between performance and urban space can become a dynamic and imaginative way of producing space. What I aim to offer is a better understanding of how urban space is influenced and even re-defined by the performance event or performative actions. Performance practices rooted in the urban space offer the audience the chance to discover unknown sides of the city and synthesise their own view of the complex urban environment. The audience is invited to encounter, edit and recompose the city through their experience of the performance. In other words, contemporary performance practices offer an influential and creative way of using and activating spaces, questioning the customary use of space and enriching the meaning of the urban environment.

My research approach entails an applied methodology, that is, the examination of key theoretical ideas on space of spatial thinkers such as Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey, David Harvey and Nigel Thrift, by focusing on specific studies of four sites in London. Through their points of connection and points of conflict, the case studies selected allow this thesis to unravel its arguments and establish its stance. All cases are related to a range of sites that have been used for performance and they find themselves before, or after, redevelopment plans. The examination of their pre-

demolition, or pre-conversion state, as well as their state after their redevelopment, offer this thesis the ground to address issues related to function and purpose of built spaces, to architecture and urban environment. Furthermore, the inspection of the various architectural concepts that surround these sites and their diverse uses provides a way of understanding the multiple ways that built spaces function, and delivers a spectrum of perspectives for analysing urban space.

The thesis argues that urban space, its use and its architectural qualities can be re-defined through performance; thus, the possibilities of the physical manifestation of urban space, its function and meaning are multiplied. Performance practices and concepts call us to re-think urban space and they act as mediums of producing space otherwise. A performative analysis of the built environment can potentially expand the meanings of city-spaces and contribute to the emancipation of space. Through creative processes, imagination, and inventive use of space, the restrictions which urban space entails can be turned into opportunities for discovering new perspectives of thinking about the built environment, its use and its re-appropriation. Alternative performance practices that take place outside theatre buildings disrupt commonly held ideas about urban space, performance space, and theatre building.

For the cases examined I was present as an audience member or as a visitor and I had worked as a performer in one of these spaces.[1] I visited the spaces more than once (with the exception of the interior of Wapping warehouse, which I entered only once, on the evening of the performance), observing their structure, materials, surroundings and the activities they encouraged, or discouraged. My research work is also informed by my studies and empirical knowledge as a performer, as well as my studies and work experience in construction sites as a civil engineer before I pursued further studies in performance. My interest in space has been developed through both fields and I have been looking for a common language to speak about concepts related to the built environment and the way of experiencing it through the two different disciplines.

By looking at different types of spaces, which have been used for performance purposes within the wider composition of the city, the discussion unravels through the following central questions: how do architecture and the materiality of built structures

[1] Although this performance work, which took place at Tate Modern in 2006 and was facilitated by Seven Sisters performance group, is not included in the thesis, it has informed my experience of the specific space.

affect the meaning of space? What role do concepts that directly or indirectly influence the built environment play on how we experience the urban space? How do spatial practices suggested by performance challenge conceptions about architecture's role, space functionality and the material environment of the city? How can a performance event potentially diversify uses and concepts of spaces and alter our engagement with the urban environment? How do performance and performative views of space contribute to its production?

Since the aim of the research is to analyse the interaction between the built environment and performance – that is, how spatial practices and vocabularies of performance influence notions of urban space and even destabilise its intended use, and how urban space contributes to the realisation and experience of the performance – an interdisciplinary approach is required. The thesis proposes a close investigation through performance studies, urban studies, geography and architecture, whilst key concepts of anthropology and social studies are applied to the analysis. Given the fact that the notion of space is a multifaceted issue intertwined with notions of power, geographical, political and social structures, as well as economic systems, it has been the subject of discussions across disciplines, all of which intend to illuminate different aspects of space. The interdisciplinary approach of the thesis seeks to contribute to the dialogue across academic fields, finding points of connections and points of conflict that enrich the discussion.

It is necessary to look at a wider theoretical framework, in order to accomplish an enlightening analysis of aspects and processes that produce space, the way space is conceived, represented and used. As David Wiles observes, '[t]he context for a history of performance space is a history of *space*.' (2003: 4, italics original); therefore, in order to achieve a better understanding of the interrelationship between built environment and contemporary performance, it is essential to move beyond the field of performance studies and outline the development of concepts of space in urban studies, geography and architecture. However, I will start with an overview of concepts and methods related to the examination of space in performance, and then I will continue with an overview of concepts of space in urban studies and geography that act as a basis for the arguments this thesis seeks to establish.

1.1 Theatre space(s)

It is even within the very definition of the word 'theatre' that space and the performance event are fully interconnected and inseparable. The theatre includes both the meaning of the space where the performance event takes place, and theatre praxis itself: 'theatre is perhaps the only art form in which the name given to the place where the artistic event occurs, or where the art object is displayed, is the same as that of the art form itself' (2000: 1), as Gay McAuley observes. The meaning of theatre (*theatron*) as 'a place for seeing' (Carlson 1989: 62), ascertains a spatial configuration that defines the space one observes and the space in which one is observed. This basic definition of theatre space suggested by the word 'theatre' is of central importance 'to the theatre as cultural system, since the spatial configuration is so basic to this system that it can almost be taken as a defining condition of theatre, even in the absence of *any* architectural structure' (1989: 128, italics original), as Marvin Carlson argues. The different spatial manifestations of this primary condition of theatre, the meeting of the observer and the observed, have resulted in a diversity of physical arrangements of performance spaces, the characteristics and qualities of which influence the meaning of theatre.

In the context of theatre studies, there has been extensive research concerning theatre architecture, such as Walden P. Boyle's *Central and Flexible Staging* (1956), Stephen Joseph's *Actor and Architect* (1964) and *New Theatre Forms* (1968), Richard and Helen Leacroft's *Theatre and Playhouse* (1984), Iain Mackintosh's *Architecture, Actor and Audience* (1993), and George C. Izenour's *Theatre Design* (1996). These studies, though, focus on the internal arrangement of theatre buildings, and mainly the stage and auditorium organisation, design and relationship. In his study *A Short History of Western Performance Space* (2003), Wiles presents a detailed historical perspective on western performance spaces and practices, by crossing different historical periods from the ancient Greek to Peter Brook's more recent concept of the 'empty space'. He divides historiographical study into seven 'micro-histories' of western performance space, most of them rooted in classical antiquity and deals with certain formations of space and the physical relationship they entail between audience, performers and spatial environment. Wiles claims that '[m]ost works of theatre history present theatre spaces as immobile lifeless containers within which unfold the rich and fecund careers of authors and actors' (2003: 8). In the same line Joanne Tompkins in *Unsettling Space* observes that although space is a crucial parameter in analysing theatre, 'there have been fewer critical considerations of theatrical space than one

might expect, perhaps because it is an obvious theatrical element', and she notes that '[t]heatre buildings are colloquially considered to be vacuums that require filling by actors, properties and audience' (2006: 5).

However, theatre practitioners and writers of the past century, such as Adolphe Appia (see Beacham 1987), Antonin Artaud (see Artaud 1970), Tadeusz Kantor (see Kantor 1993), and Jerzy Grotowski (see Grotowski 1969) sought to reveal and incorporate the dynamics of performance space into theatre work, and to challenge traditional arrangements of theatre spaces. In scholarly analysis in theatre studies that have intended to examine the meanings that theatre space entails, Carlson's *Places of Performance* (1989) stands as a landmark study. By employing architectural and urban semiotics, Carlson emphasises the importance of examining the physical aspects of theatre space and its surroundings for the reasons that they both 'reflect the social and cultural concerns and suppositions of their creators and their audiences' (1989: 2). The meaning that society assigns to theatre building affects audience reception, not only of a specific performance, but also of the theatre as a cultural expression. Carlson expanded the theoretical approach of theatre semiotics beyond the stage-auditorium relationship, so his investigation included the rest of the interior spaces of theatre, the exterior of it and its position in the urban net. Carlson exemplifies the firm connections between theatre, or non-theatre building – although he mainly focuses on buildings dedicated to theatrical use – and the wider urban context and how this contributes to meaning-making process for an audience.

The theatre building, despite its different spatial manifestations, is constantly present within city life and it claims its own space within the urban environment; as Carlson ascertains, '[t]he theatre is in fact one of the most persistent architectural objects in the history of Western culture' (1989: 6). This persistence of theatre buildings as architectural objects within a constantly changing urban setting should not mean that theatre buildings' 'urban role is stable', but that it has found ways 'to accommodate itself to a variety of urban functions as the city around it has changed', as Carlson claims (1989: 7). Theatre has been a central element of the city's architecture, even when it occupies the urban margins, and has always been in a constant dialogue with the city. Theatre shapes, and is shaped by, concepts and actions that occur in built spaces.

The articulation of space in theatre, as well as its relationship with the rest of the built environment plays a fundamental role in the reception of the performance

event. As Carlson agues, theatre experience is not only determined by the performance itself, 'by what happens on stage', but also by the physical arrangements of the theatre building and its location within the city: '[t]he entire theatre, its audience arrangements, its other public spaces, its physical appearance, even its location within the city, are all important elements of the process by which an audience makes meaning of its experience' (1989: 2). With concerns for the location of the theatre building, Carlson points out that although there is considerable knowledge about the structure of the interior of major theatres of the past, it is evident that there is a lack of knowledge about the site of theatre buildings and how this might have contributed to the audience experience:

> […] for the majority of major theatres in most historical periods our mental image of their interior or the reproduction of that interior in our standard histories is rarely matched by the slightest idea of where within the city that theatre was located or what that location may have meant to audiences of the time. And yet surely this is a critical part of our understanding of how these audiences viewed and interacted with the theatre. (1989: 10)

And although since then there has been more research concerning the location of theatre buildings, the relationship between theatre and urban setting, is still limited within theatre studies. As Stanton B. Garner observes:

> […] given the obvious centrality of the city to theatrical culture (and vice versa), it is remarkable how little attention has been paid to the functioning of theatre within the urban landscape and how little consideration is given to the parameters of theater as a specifically urban institution and practice. (2002: 96)

Garner gives an explanation for the reasons for this, by saying that it is partially attributable to the 'function of the theater itself and the operations by which theatrical performance tends to suspend, render invisible, the fields (spatial, temporal) of actual location' (2002: 96). Whilst Carlson makes a similar point, by stating that the analysis of the theatre experience 'often encourages a kind of bracketing of the rest of the event structure' and overlooks the physical parameters, either taking them for granted, or considering that their 'neutrality' makes them not part of the event, '[i]t is clear, however, that the physical surroundings of performance never act as a totally neutral filter or frame. They are themselves always culturally encoded, and have always, sometimes subtly, contributed to the reception of the performance' (1989: 206). This is something that Wiles also points out in relation to Peter Brook's famous claim of 'empty space' in 1968 – 'I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage' (Brook 1972: 11) – when he sees the empty space as 'an ideal locus for performance, a

space emptied of any attributes that associate it with a particular place and time' (2003: 241). Although Brook's concept has widely influenced, and in a way liberated, practitioners and theoreticians from theatre conventions and structure, it is, as Wiles describes: 'philosophically untenable' (2003: 243). The idealised concept of the 'emptiness' of the space can be read as an attempt to diminish the characteristics and identity of space, or neglect the physical factors that surround the performance event and contribute to its experience.

Carlson's study opens up the ways of examining the link between theatre space and city space and highlights the importance of investigating the meaning theatre attains within the city. Thus, his analysis can be expanded, for example, to consider the meaning of theatres situated at city's edges, such as experimental or community theatres, as well as in city's paths, such as performance walks. Even in cases where non-theatre spaces have been employed by a performance, the reasons that have led to the use of these spaces should be examined and analysed since the different approaches, as Carlson points out, demonstrate prevalent attitudes 'toward the balance in this "found" space between the semiotics it already possesses in its previous role and those that might be imposed upon it as it is used for performance' (1989: 207).

More recently, Gay McAuley and Ric Knowles have directly engaged with the question of how space produces or affects performance meaning. McAuley seeks to establish a systematic way of examining theatre's spatiality. In the first section of her study *Space in Performance* (2000), she deals with the physical space of theatre and its location and she brings into the discussion examples of how spatial arrangement participate in the theatre experience of productions that mainly staged classic plays. She proposes a taxonomy related to the function of space in theatre performance, and she divides *theatre space*, which relates to the building and its urban context, into *audience space* and *practitioner space* (McAuley 2000: 25-26). The main distinctive difference of these two parts of theatre space is audience accessibility. The audience space is open to the public[2] whilst the practitioner space restricts public access. The *practitioner space* is connected with spaces that belong to theatre practitioners, technicians and workers, spaces that exclude audience presence. The meeting point of audience and performers is what McAuley calls *performance space*, the components of which are part of the two aforementioned categories.

[2] Or better, to a public that pays for a ticket, if we think about the access to the auditorium only for ticket holders.

In his book *Reading the Material Theatre* (2004), Ric Knowles suggests the combination of two theoretical approaches, cultural materialism and theatre semiotics, in order to achieve a systematic analysis of theatre production and its theatrical codes, within its historical, cultural and material contexts. Thus, through materialist semiotics, he attempts to unpack the material aspects of theatre, including theatre space and its geographical place, that affect the meaning produced in a performance event; in other words: '*how meaning is produced*' (2004: 11, italics original). He thoroughly investigates the material conditions of theatre, arguing that each theatre production, and as a consequence its meaning,

> […] will depend, in part, on the material conditions, both theatrical and cultural, within and through which it is produced and received, conditions which function as its political unconscious, speaking through the performance text whatever its manifest content or intent. (2004: 10)

Knowles's analysis provides a critical strategy that interrogates the ideologies and semiotic significance entangled with theatre space – its auditorium, stage, backstage – and its geographical location, showing that 'the geographical and architectural spaces of theatrical production are never empty', they are spaces 'full of histories, ghosts, pressures, opportunities, and constraints, of course, but most frequently they are full of ideology' (2004: 63).[3] His study exemplifies how the meaning of theatre performance is influenced by the material factors surrounding or taking part directly in the performance. He summarises the parameters that play a role in the creation and meaning of theatre production in 'performance' (which concerns 'the raw theatrical event'), 'conditions of production' (that includes technical aspects of theatre, working conditions, training, funding and the spaces of stage, backstage and rehearsal room), and 'conditions of reception' (which are related to amenities addressed to the audience, forms of publicity of the theatre production, and spatial organisation as concerns the geography of the theatre's location, neighbourhood, theatre architecture and the auditorium) (see Knowles 2004: 3, 10-11). Each of these aspects and their mutual relationship contribute to the theatre event and its meaning, since they contribute to the ideological coding and social hierarchies that affect theatre spaces.

[3] Thus, for example, he exemplifies how the proscenium stage is entangled with 'ideologically coded ways of seeing', promoting ways of 'focus' employed by the directors that are considered to be 'politically neutral'; however, 'the achievement of this type of focus is an exercise of power, controlling the audience's gaze and insisting on a unity of vision and perspective that is coercive' (2004: 64).

Even in cases where theatre companies seek to challenge hierarchical and social divisions dictated by the organisation of theatre space by eliminating, for example, the auditorium/stage segregation, ideological or pragmatic issues may limit their attempt. Knowles argues that the practice of environmental theatre, which looks for ways of eradicating architectural barriers may 'capitalize upon an already semiotically charged environment' or 'create a fully enclosed atmosphere of "total theatre"', therefore, '[d]epending on how it is used, this can be either the most democratic or most manipulative of staging configurations' (2004: 75).[4] It is evident from Knowles's study that in order to understand how meaning is produced and the role of spaces in the creation and production of meaning, a detailed analysis of practices and spaces is demanded. Knowles suggests that all spaces 'can be put to productive use if they are fully understood both physically and ideologically; that is, if they are not taken for granted and considered to be neutral, value free, empty, or natural' (2004: 65). Knowles's affirmation that '[t]he geography of performance is both produced by and produces the cultural landscape and the social organization of the space in which "takes place," and to shift physical and/or social space is to shift meaning' (2004: 63), opens up an area of investigation for performances that have moved away from conventional theatre space, which is the case in most case studies employed in this research.

However, cultural materialism as a critical strategy presents its own limitations, since it 'risks suggesting that making socially progressive theatre verges on the impossible because theatre is always so constrained by its material conditions' (2009b: 9), as Jen Harvie observes in her book *Theatre & the City* (2009). Harvie suggests that although cultural materialism helps us to investigate the impact of prevailing ideologies on theatre practices, it also disempowers performance's potentiality. This is because cultural materialism mainly revolves around the idea that material conditions constrain theatre meaning, and even determine the theatre experience; thus, 'it can be almost totalising in its negativity or, even, cynicism' (2009b: 43), as Harvie says. By

[4] It is worth noting that although Richard Schechner, having loudly rejected conventional theatre configuration with his *Environmental Theatre*, acknowledges that: 'the theatre itself is part of larger environments outside the theatre. These larger out-of-the-theatre spaces are the life of the city; and also temporal-historical spaces-modalities of time/space' (1994: 2), he neglects to refer to the architectural characteristics of his theatre space The Performing Garage, its previous use and the relationship with its location – however, these can be found in *Theatres Spaces Environments; 18 Projects* (McNamara et al. 1975). Thus, The Performing Garage seems to operate as an isolated laboratory where although spatial experimentation takes place in its interior, it is cut off from its surroundings and there is no indication how the past history of the space or its location may affect the function of it as a performance space.

focusing mainly on the way performance's material aspects condition production processes and the response of the audience, cultural materialism 'can paint a picture of the role of theatre in the city where citizens and audiences seem to be inevitably caught in an oppressive, exploitative, uncreative culture with no opportunity to escape its hold, challenge its exploitations or be creative' (2009b: 43). Therefore, this critical strategy may remove or overlook the potentiality of a performance event to bring or affect any change in theatre, the urban environment or society as a whole.

In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the parameters that influence theatre experience, as well as the impact of the performance event on the audience and on the urban life, Harvie proposes to 'hybridise cultural materialist and performative analytic strategies' (2009b: 69). Performative critical approach often suggests performance's unlimited possibilities and progressiveness (2009b: 9-10); as Harvie argues, it 'credits people as social agents, individuals with the freedom and ability to act performatively to change our lives, destinies and urban society in an age of global capitalism' (2009b: 66). However, performative analysis can be characterised as '*overly* optimistic, even naïve' (2009b: 67, italics original), since it often 'concentrates overwhelmingly on the ways people can and do act with freedom to self-author, exercising agency, control and power through everyday acts of self-articulation and self-creation' (2009b: 45), whilst at the same time, it dismisses the social and material conditions that these actions take place and which often restrain them.

Since both of these critical strategies – cultural materialism and performative analysis – have their benefits and limitations, Harvie's suggestion to employ their methodological tools in cooperation can prove a productive way of examining performance and urban practices. In this way the two critical approaches can donate their strengths to each other and the analysis that comes into question can be rooted in material reality without depriving the opportunity of hope. Harvie coins the terms: 'materialist performativity' and 'performative materialism' (2009b: 72-73), which capture the hybridisation of the two critical practices of cultural materialism and performative analysis. The materialist performativity approach recognises the factors entangled with material conditions that limit the supposed unconditioned performative practices, and as a result 'performative analysis's claims might be more carefully qualified' (2009b: 73). Performative materialism exposes the performative aspect of the material conditions in question, untying notions of impossibility and pessimism

from cultural materialism and providing a way of thinking how material conditions encircling theatre 'can positively change theatre and urban life' (2009b: 73).

The combination of the two theoretical approaches of cultural materialism and performative analysis provides a productive way of thinking throughout this discussion, since this research investigates the material conditions as concerns performance spaces, but at the same time aims to investigate the performativity of space itself and reveal the opportunities hidden in the complex urban environment that can be brought into focus through the performance event. Nowadays, it is widely accepted that the space where a performance takes place contributes to the process of creating meaning in theatre production. However, most studies in the field of theatre are mainly occupied with analysing the effect of space (either this is related to urban space or architectural space) on theatre. Although this research has taken into consideration the impact of space on performance, it has mainly focussed on understanding how performance has an impact on the built environment and can shift our ideas about urban space, its manifestation and use. Wiles asserts that 'the play-as-event belongs to the space and makes the space perform as much as it makes actors perform' (2003: 1). With this in mind, I have sought to explore how space performs or is re-introduced through performance events or performance concepts.

1.2 Space and place

The definition of 'space' and 'place' – how each of these terms is related to, or differs from the other – has been in the centre of an ongoing academic debate. Although both of these terms refer to the physical environment, they are often associated with diverse and often conflicting meanings. As Phil Hubbard puts it, '[t]hough the concepts of space and place may appear self-explanatory, they have been (and remain) two of the most diffuse, ill-defined and inchoate concepts in the social sciences and humanities' (2005: 41). The complex relationship of space and place and the difficulty of their definition and distinction are asserted by the way that these two terms are used interchangeably.[5] Hubbard observes: 'in their "everyday" use, the two are often used synonymously with terms such as environment, region, location, area and landscape' (2005: 41). Since in this thesis I principally use the term 'space', I

[5] The meaning of place, space and site has also been an issue in perfomance studies. For example, in the 'Special Issue: On Site and Place' of *Research in Drama Education*, although the editors specify the way they use the terms 'place' and 'site' in applied performance practices, they do not omit to mention that these terms often overlap (see Mackey and Whybrow 2007).

consider it necessary to discuss the main concepts surrounding the terms place and space, in order to exemplify why this choice has been made.

In the field of geography, the dualism of the two terms became emphasised during the second half of the previous century. In the 1970s two main strands of geographical inquiry, humanistic geography and Marxist geography, emerged as counterpoints to the notion of 'absolute' space, which maintained that 'the world was essentially a blank canvas, and, rather than playing an active role in shaping social life, formed a surface on which social relations were played out' (Hubbard 2005: 42). Thus, due to the fact that both these strands became particularly distinctive, the demarcation of the two terms came into the centre of the geographical debate. As is indicated in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*: '[p]lace was seen as more subjectively defined, existential and particular, while space was thought to be universal, more abstract phenomenon, subject to scientific law' (Johnston et al. 2000: 582). Humanistic geography developed its approach around the key concepts of 'place, sense of place, and placelessness' (Johnston et al. 2000: 582), whilst the Marxist, or materialist geography examined 'the relations of domination and resistance played out across different spaces' (Hubbard 2005: 41). In the first case, place was entangled with a bounded location which was characterised by the lived experiences of people, and in the second case, space was considered as a social product.

In human geography's approach Yi-Fu Tuan's study *Space and Place* (1977) stands as a cornerstone. Tuan's *Space and Place* followed his earlier study *Topophilia* (1974) in which he examined the physical environment in terms of values ascribed to it and human perception. The emphasis on the importance of the experiential qualities of place and its differentiation from the abstractness of space presented in his *Space and Place* brought human experience and individuals' attachment to place into the focus of geographers' attention. It also opened the way for an existential and phenomenological approach to place (see, for example, Casey 1993). Although, Tuan observes that '[i]n experience, the meaning of space often merges with that of place' (1977: 6), and that '[t]he ideas "space" and "place" require each other for definition' (1977: 6), in his analysis he attempts to clarify the characteristics of the two terms. '"Space" is more abstract than "place"' (1977: 6), and it becomes place 'as we get to know it better and endow it with value' (1977: 6), Tuan asserts. Tuan's claim suggests that space is an obscure concept detached from human actions and perception, which comes into being only when people invest meaning to it and transform it into place.

And according to Tuan this is achieved by identifying place with pause: 'place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place' (1977: 6), he characteristically says. Thus, whilst place promises security and stability, space is related to movement – and if we follow Tuan's suggestion, this indicates a lack of human attachment – and also space signifies freedom and openness. In the transition from place to space we are confronted with what Tuan calls 'threat of space' (1977: 6); we are experiencing the tension of the unknown and the familiar, the unexpected and the customary. 'Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to one and long for the other' (1977: 3), he says. Although Tuan's study presents a valuable perspective on the importance of belonging and experiencing spatiality, in some respects his analysis leads to the idea that movement constitutes a risk to our attachment to place, which implies that place should be, or is unaffected by fluidity and changeability of life.

The notion of place becomes particularly problematic in view of increasing mobility and living in a globalised world. Since place is identified as a bounded location that refuses movement, it is often considered to be subordinate to space, which seems to offer a wider ground for discussions about the global. The identification of place with a specific geographical location and its resistance to flow and influences of the 'external' world, often render the concept of place being considered as reactionary and introverted; and it is associated with isolation and exclusion (see Massey 1994). At the same time, the qualities the place connotes – such as security, uniqueness and spatial and social identity – are in danger of being undermined or ignored because of the cumulative flow of people, capital, information and commodities. The anthropologist Marc Augé, analysing the symptoms of the modern, globalised world, claims that it 'surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral' (1995: 78), thus the world rendered to be characterised by 'placelessness'. Augé adopts the term 'non-places' to portray built spaces, such as airports, motorways, shopping centres, supermarkets and hotel chains, which do not present a distinctive identity and do not call for people's attachment, but serve merely as transit points of 'supermodernity'. He explains: '[i]f a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place' (1995: 77-78). Non-place, which entails 'the opposition between place and space' (1995: 79), is a kind of side product of the contemporary capitalist driven world. It

represents the velocity with which people and products are called to participate in the global society; and it indicates the failure of human beings to engage with their environment.

Within the effects and consequences of a globalised world, 'the importance of studying place and place specificity' (Johnston et al. 2000: 583) is considered crucial by some theoreticians. Place reproduces concepts that found themselves under threat, such as community, collective memory, identity and human engagement; it represents historical and cultural continuation. However, ideas of place may be associated with locality, territoriality, isolation and introversion; thus place may be related to 'defensive and reactionary responses: certain forms of nationalism, sentimentalized recovering of sanitized "heritages", and outright antagonism to newcomers and "outsiders"' (1994: 147), as Doreen Massey observes. Studies, such as Tim Cresswell's *In Place/Out of Place* (1996), have pointed out the association of the notion of place with order and how place is used as a means of controlling human actions and behavior. The seeming stability that place ensures becomes a way of organising space and excluding unwelcome members and activities. Cresswell exemplifies how people and practices are considered to be 'out of place' when they do not fit within the dominant ideologies governing urban space (see Cresswell 1996). The human need for safety and belonging is turned into an instrument of order and categorisation; thus, clear demarcations and rules are imposed upon the built space in order to keep everything in 'its proper place'; practices define what belongs to where and what should be expected in each place; any deviation from established norms or rigid forms that might be in the 'wrong place' is characterised as an 'outsider'. Thus, in the name of place, urban space has often turned out to be too restricted and overruling.

De Certeau in his *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) seems to agree with Tuan's view of place, by stating that place 'implies an indication of stability' (1984: 117). However, de Certeau observes the function of place as a way of ordering and governing space: '[a] place (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence' and he suggests that '[t]he law of the "proper" rules in the place' (1984: 117, italics original). On the other hand, for de Certeau 'space is like the word when it is spoken', thus, in opposition to place, it has 'none of the univocity or stability of a "proper"' (1984: 117). Since '[t]he "proper" is *a triumph of place over time*' (1984: 36, italics original), and space opposes to the

idea of 'proper', then action, appropriation and movement that space entails can function beyond the established rules. 'In short, *space is a practiced place*' (1984: 117, italics original) says de Certeau, and he explains: 'the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers' (1984: 117). This suggests that space comes into existence through connections of elements associated with mobility; and the operations of the city users who have the chance to appropriate space through use, turn space from an abstract concept into a product of human action. De Certeau's view on the opposition between space and place emphasises the dynamic aspect of space because of its association to the 'operation' of the 'subjects' producing it and the rather fixed meanings that are ascribed to 'objects' that constitute place:

> In our examination of the daily practices that articulate that experience, the opposition between "place" and "space" will rather refer to two sorts of determinations in stories: the first, a determination through objects that are ultimately reducible to the *being-there* of something dead, the law of a "place" […] the second, a determination through *operations* which, when they are attributed to a stone, tree, or human being, specify "spaces" by the actions of historical *subjects* (a movement always seems to condition the production of space and to associate it with a history). (1984: 118, italics original)

In this debate about the dichotomisation of space and place, Massey offers an enlightened point of view. She challenges the established definition of the two terms and the chasm that has been created in their application to the theoretical discourses. She suggests that places do not function just as a bounded site at a particular moment but as a point where flows intersect and interact. In view of increasing mobility and globalisation, place should come out of its relative isolation and notions of boundedness and exclusion and be considered as 'open and porous' (1994: 5). In a way, she calls for a concept of place that incorporates the processes operating within a global world, instead of considering these as a threat to place's uniqueness and specificity. Massey argues for a progressive sense of place, which is not 'self–enclosing and defensive' (1994: 147), but 'extroverted' and 'includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local' (1994: 155). For this to happen, Massey proposes to think of place as 'a *meeting* place' of global communications and relations (1994: 154, italics original). Place is not specified by bounded sites or internalised histories, but as 'a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus' (1994: 154). In this way, Massey detaches fixity from the concept of place and challenges the meaning and the way of constructing place-based boundaries and identities, since as she claims

'[t]he specificity of place is continually reproduced' (1994: 155) in a globalised world. What Massey suggests is 'a global sense of place' (1994: 156).

Following another entry point to access the meaning of place, Massey shows that not only humans, but also continents and natural formations are on the move. Referring to geological and paleontological observations and history of the northern Lake District, in the northwest England landscape, she claims: '[w]hat this geological history tells us is that this "natural" place to which we appeal for timelessness has of course been (and still is) constantly changing' (2005: 133). According to Massey, everything is shifting, is in constant formation, transformation, erosion and renewal; and within this context, the 'throwntogetherness' of place asks for negotiation:

> […] but what is special about place is not some resonance of a pre-given collective identity or of the eternity of the hills. Rather, what is special about place is precisely that throwntogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now (itself drawing on a history and a geography of thens and theres); and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman. (2005: 140)

For Massey, '[t]his is the event of place' (2005: 140); it involves 'the coming together of the previously unrelated, a constellation of processes rather than a thing' and this constitutes place 'open and as internally multiple. Not capturable as a slice through time in the sense of an essential section. Not intrinsically coherent' (2005: 141). Massey's conceptualisation of place challenges assumptions related to its coherence and stability; as well as our implication in negotiating the multiple phenomena that accompany its 'throwntogetherness' and our engagement of 'those trajectories (both 'social' and 'natural'), those stories-so-far, within (and not only within) that conjuncturality' (2005: 142). Massey abstracts space and place from the fixity of meanings of the past, as well as challenges the division between place and space. Space and place are merged together and they are both under constant production, interpretation and negotiation of the 'stories-so-far'; as Masssey says: '[i]f space is rather a simultaneity of stories-so-far, then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space' (2005: 131). Massey's study on space and place, and specifically her later work *For Space*, are particularly important for the purposes of this thesis; therefore, I come back to some of her main points in relation to space in a following section.

In materialist geography, emerging in the 1970s, 'space was deemed to be implicated in social relations, both socially produced and consumed' (Hubbard 2005:

42). In this strand of spatial inquiry the work of the Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre *The Production of Space* has proved one of the most influential. Lefebvre's study on how space is socially produced and how this contradicts what is called 'absolute' space and 'abstract' space and his concept of triadic spatiality has constituted theoretical background of a range of spatial studies. Thus, drawing on Lefebvre, geographers have developed their spatial theories by looking at space as a social product rather than an abstract concept. David Harvey, for example, in *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989) has examined the impact of the material and cultural conditions of modernity and postmodernity on the fabrication of space and the influence of time-space compression and homogenisation on spatial experience. Lefebvre's view has not only shifted the conceptions of how built space is produced and represented, but also how it is used, and most importantly, how it is imagined. Since I consider Lefebvre's work on space as fundamental to this thesis I review some of his key arguments in the following section of the Introduction. Lefebvre analyses space, and seeks a wider relation of space to social life, rather than to a specific site or location; however, the discussion about how social space is constructed, culturally and administratively affected, and practically lived and imagined, brings, in a way, the idea of space closer to place. By this I mean that space discards its abstractness and becomes associated with people and their activities; whilst the processes that produce it become able to be identified and scrutinized. As Cresswell observes, the dualism of space and place 'is confused somewhat by the idea of social space – or socially produced space – which, in many ways, plays the same role as place' (2004: 9).

As we have seen in this overview of space and place, the plethora of meanings and interpretations of these terms often overlap and certainly need each other's definition for their existence. As Hubbard puts it: 'the boundaries of place and space are deemed contingent, their seemingly solidity, authenticity or permanence a (temporary) achievement of cultural systems of signification that are open to multiple interpretations and readings' (2005: 46). I find especially productive, therefore, for it opens a way of thinking of these two terms in a more liberating way for me, what Hubbard mentions: 'the key question about space and place is not what they *are*, but what they *do*' (2005: 47, my emphasis). By mainly employing the term space in the thesis, I aim at examining what space *does*. I do not intend to remove the experiential dimension from space, or argue for its detachment from human action. On the contrary, I employ the term space, in order to emphasise the experience of spatial materiality,

and to exemplify how human action bestows on space its shape, function and meaning. Furthermore, the term space has been productive and helpful in accommodating the discussion of the built environment – its architectural practices and materiality – and in which, through performance and performativity, I intend to suggest another way of understanding and defining space.

1.2.1 Lefebvre's production of space

The seminal work of Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre *The Production of Space* has had a great impact on scholars working across different disciplines, such as geographers, urbanists, architects, even theatre theoreticians since the second half of the previous century.[6] Lefebvre's critique and analyses of space aim for an understanding of the role of space within western capitalist societies, and they attempt to detach space from discourses that render it an abstract receptacle disconnected from everyday life and social practices. '(Social) space is a (social) product' (1991: 26), Lefebvre argues, whilst he specifies that the term 'social space' refers to 'an unlimited multiplicity or uncountable set of social spaces', which are interrelated, or even overlay one another (1991: 86). Lefebvre defines social space as follows:

> The form of social space is encounter, assembly, simultaneity. But what assembles, or what is assembled? The answer is: everything that there is *in space*, everything that is produced either by nature or by society, either through their co-operation or through their conflicts. Everything: living beings, things, objects, works, signs and symbols. (1991: 101, italics original)

Lefebvre's interest in focusing on the urban environment was enhanced by the fact that, for a period in the late 1950s he was member of the Situationist International group led by Guy Debord. The Situationist International was a group of intellectuals and artists that sought to liberate the interpretation and experience of city-spaces from notions of spectacle that govern society (see Debord 1994). Lefebvre's collaboration with the Situationist International 'was crucial in directing his [Lefebvre's] attention to urban environments as the contexts of everyday life and the expression of social relations of production' (2004: 209), as Rob Shields claims. Furthermore, in the early 1970s, when *The Production of Space* was written, the implications of 'the massive destruction of neighborhoods and communities caused by the urban renewal projects

[6] This is especially true following the English translation of the book in 1991, which enabled *The Production of Space* to be widely read.

of the 1950s and 1960s, and by the social problems and pathologies of new town planning' (Lawrence and Low 1990: 482) were evident. Within this context, Lefebvre sought to analyse urban space and the parameters this consists of, by bringing into his discussion the roles that culture and society, as well as economic and political structures, play in the production of space.

For Lefebvre the introduction of Cartesian logic to science and philosophy was a critical moment in the way that space was conceptualised, since thereafter 'space entered the realm of absolute' (1991: 1). Descartes's philosophical and scientific perspective in the 17th century, despite its thorough analytical way of examining the 'whole', was 'an essentially mechanical and mathematical representation of reality' (Merrifield: 518), which pointed towards dualism through the logical categorisation and ordering of the world and promoted a scientific gaze detached from lived space but placed on somewhere outside, beyond and above the world. The Cartesian view brought to philosophical discourse 'a sharp separation between thinking and the material world, between the mind and the matter, between the observer and the observed, and between the analyser and the analysed' (1993: 518), as Andrew Merrifield observes. The duality between concepts and the materiality of the world, or mind and physical reality, generated the distance of space from everyday practice – or from 'the empirical sphere' in Lefebvre's terms (1991: 2). Descartes's stance on spatial conception resulted in space becoming associated with the idea of an empty container; or as Lefebvre puts it, space attained 'a strictly geometrical meaning', being predominantly connected with mathematics, which rendered the concept of space 'simply that of an empty area' (1991: 1). However, as Lefebvre notes:

> Vis-à-vis lived experience, space is neither a mere "frame," after the fashion of the frame of a painting, nor a form or container of a virtually neutral kind, designed simply to receive whatever is poured into it. Space is social morphology: it is to lived experience what form itself is to the living organism, and just as intimately bound up with function and structure. (1991: 93-94)

Lefebvre observes how the notion of space has been limited within philosophical discourse and has been abstracted from reality and the empirical aspect of life. At the same time he diagnoses how space has become fragmented by the increased specialisation of professionals and theorists related to space: '[t]he architects are assigned architectural space as their (private) property, economists come into possession of economic space, geographers get their own "place in the sun"' (1991: 89). The division of space into pieces and their examination through perspectives

which ask for ownership, focusing, though, only on a fragment, ignore – or even hinder by 'setting up mental barriers and practico-social frontiers' (1991: 89) – an overall understanding of space as part of the society's process. The abstract space of capitalism is simultaneously 'fragmented and fractured' (1991: 355), Lefebvre says. For Lefebvre there is no such a division between the 'global (or conceived) space' and 'fragmented (or directly experienced)' (1991: 355), but 'space "is" whole and broken, global and fractured, at one and the same time' (1991: 356).

Lefebvre identifies the necessity for a theoretical approach that 'would analyse not things in space but space itself, with a view to uncovering the social relationships embedded in it' (1991: 89); and he proposes a 'unitary theory' across fields which tend to function, understand and conceptualise space independently. His theory seeks to bring unity to the following fields: 'first, the physical – nature, the Cosmos; secondly, the mental, including logical and formal abstractions; and thirdly, the social' (1991: 11). In order to analyse the parameters contributing to the process of producing space he devises 'a conceptual triad', which consists of 'spatial practice', 'representations of space' and 'representational spaces' (1991: 33-9). Lefebvre calls for his tripartite conceptualisation of space to not be considered as 'simple or stable', since the effects and associations of each space depend on the society and historical period examined (1991: 46, 163). His overview on the concepts of space in different periods advocates that each society produces its own idea of space. Apart from the spatial conceptual triad, Lefebvre suggests that there is a new kind of space, which he calls 'differential space', and which, in opposition to abstract space, 'accentuates differences' (1991: 52), but at the same time 'restore[s] unity to what abstract space breaks up' (1991: 52). It is the space 'of a different (social) life and of different mode of production' that is yet to come; it 'straddles the breach between science and utopia, reality and ideality, conceived and lived'; it explores 'the dialectical relationship between "possible" and "impossible" (1991: 60).

Lefebvre's assertion that the production of social space is an 'act of creation, in fact, a process' (1991: 34) obtains a significant meaning for it discards concepts and practices that tend to produce and reproduce space, by solidifying, stabilising and commanding it. Furthermore, it is evident that if social space is 'a process' then is entwined with time. Lefebvre acknowledges the inseparable relationship between time and space throughout his spatial analysis. The notion of time contributes to detaching space from theories that render it inactive and fixed and which suggest practices that

treat space as a container that waits to be filled. Through Lefebvre's analysis of lived and experienced space, space 'may be directional, situational or relational'; it becomes 'qualitative, fluid and dynamic' (1991: 42).

Lefebvre's analysis of the production of space constitutes a central point of reference in the discussion of urban space for at least three reasons: first, it removes space from notions that constitute space as either an absolute that is governed by scientific laws, or an abstract that is alienated by social histories and structures. Both of these perspectives dismiss the connection of space with human action, asking for either an external observer or an objective truth. Second, it provides the tools for examining the process of producing space within the wider context of society, by bringing a dialectical relationship between the different modes of production; that is, how space is conceptualised and represented, how it is appropriated by spatial practices, and how space is produced by the living experience. This last point plays a significant part for the third reason that Lefebvre's analysis is valuable to the discussion of urban space, for it is through spatial experiences, human action and imagination, that city-spaces come alive. Since this research aims to examine the characteristics of urban space in relation to performance, I examine the way space is conceptualised and constructed by architects and urban planners; and the way space is lived, used by the inhabitants, or in our case, mainly, by audience and performers. As Lefebvre observes: '[t]he analysis of any space brings us up against the dialectical relationship between demand and command, along with its attendant questions: "Who?", "For whom?", "By whose agency?", "Why and how?" (1991: 116). I demonstrate how space is commonly used through spatial practices and how by the means of performance, for example in terms of imagination, play and improvisation, the urban space is activated and experienced, and opens up to new possibilities.

Space may be connected with power(s), usually conflicting with each other, and embedded ideologies – manifested in the means of representation, for example – but through the way space is experienced in everyday life, gaps for new possibilities of thought and action may be discovered. As Lefebvre suggests the produced space can serve as 'a means of control, and hence domination, of power', but also 'as a tool of thought and of action' (1991: 26). And possibly through new thoughts and actions on the production of space the dialectical approach between 'possible' and 'impossible' can be achieved.

1.2.2 Giving space a chance: the unfinished space

Massey's way of conceptualising space in her book *For Space* provides an essential theoretical context in order to achieve the disconnection of space from notions that have considered space – as Michel Foucault had observed – as 'the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile' (1980: 70). She suggests that space is 'always being made and always therefore, in a sense, unfinished' (2005: 107); her proposition offers a great potential for imagining and acting in space otherwise. For space to be unfinished and open, we need to think about it not as a container of predetermined actions and relations, but as a sphere that includes 'a heterogeneity of practices and *processes*' (2005: 107, italics original). Therefore, space can be detached from concepts of stasis and closure, which have dominated concepts and practices of it, and identified with notions of heterogeneity and liveliness. As Massey puts it:

> What is needed, I think, is to uproot 'space' from that constellation of concepts in which it has so unquestioningly so often been embedded (stasis; closure; representation) and to settle it among another set of ideas (heterogeneity; relationality; coevalness…liveliness indeed) where it releases a more challenging political landscape. (2005: 13)

Massey's argument is based on three main propositions: first, that space is 'the product of interrelations' (2005: 9); these vary depending on the scale of relations examined, thus, space may be looked at as a product of relations on a global level, and/or as a product of relations connected with the particularities of the local. Second, that space is viewed 'as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality'; since space is a product of interrelations it is inevitably intertwined with heterogeneity and plurality (2005: 9). Massey sees '[m]ultiplicity and space as co-constitutive' (2005: 9), one cannot exist without the other; '[w]ithout space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space' (2005: 9), she says. Last, Massey proposes to consider 'space as always under construction' (2005: 9); since space is a product of relations which entail ongoing material practices, space 'is never finished; never closed', but 'we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far' (2005: 9).

Following Massey's reflection on it, space becomes a product of relations, social, political and cultural, which include a variety of practices and concepts, histories and stories. The importance of Massey's consideration of space, which challenges traditional notions, rests on the fact that the way of thinking about space also determines the way we practically structure it, categorise it, experience it. If we

think of space as a sphere that allows the coexistence of diversity, as Massey proposes, then space acquires a dynamic quality and escapes notions that assume prescribed relations and practices. It is then that space sets free from immobility and fixity, it becomes 'open' and as such 'there are always connections to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction (or not, for not all potential connections have to be established), relations which may or may not be accomplished' (2005: 11). The relations that produce space, as well as the relations that are produced by it, are not defined within established and closed systems that attempt to classify and order spatial relations and practices; thus, space 'is neither a container for always-already constituted identities nor a completed closure of holism' (2005: 12). What Massey calls us to think is 'a space of loose ends and missing links' (2005: 12), a space where the unforeseen takes place, where possibilities of action and thought are multiplied.

This space 'entails the unexpected' (2005: 111), it is a space that produces and is produced by accidental encounters, unplanned actions and unpredictable links; it is a space where 'always an element of "chaos"' (2005: 111) exists. This space resists being categorized within a closed system and it is where 'different temporalities and different voices must work out means of accommodation' (2005: 111); it is a space of multiplicity. Certainly, the different contributions to the creation of space and the variety of experiences of it challenge systems of order and contest ideas of how it is produced and mastered; space cannot be viewed but as a process, a process that entails possible chaos by unintentional practices and unexpected encounters, and according to Massey '[t]his is the chance of space; the accidental neighbour is one figure of it' (2005: 111).

Looking at space as 'always unfinished and open' (2005: 107), always under construction, offers a great potential for action and empowers human presence and initiative. Massey's view on space opens up directions of thinking about the way it is conceived and realised through architecture and space's connection with time. Her propositions call us to evaluate 'the chance of space' and examine whether 'chance' has been incorporated in the way space is represented and used; whether space is thought as a sphere of possibility of diverse thoughts and actions. Specifically, in this research the built spaces employed will be examined as concerns their openness to possibility and diversity; the extent to which they incorporate into their function and appearance the 'stories-so-far'; the consideration of time and its effect on the material of the built structures; and the graphic representation of spaces by means of maps and

plans, which mainly attempt to control space, establishing routes and assuming connections, leaving 'no room for surprises' (2005: 111). The concept of the 'unfinished' space requires a consideration of space beyond the static and well-defined systems that endeavour to organise space; it is a space that produces and is produced by the unexpected, by a multiplicity of trajectories; its 'loose ends and missing links' are what makes space alive, dynamic and fluid, open to accidental discoveries.

1.3 Urban space: Its planning, architecture and meaning

Urbanists, geographers, architects - spatial professionals - have attempted to untangle the complicated phenomena and processes occurring in city-spaces; to explore the power relationships that urban space entails as well as the possibilities for urban change that arise within cities. Cities cannot be easily contained within a definition, since they comprise the accumulation of people, buildings, relationships that find themselves in a constant change. Therefore, the analysis of city-spaces becomes a rather multifaceted matter. As Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift vividly explain in their imaginatively structured book *City A-Z*:

> If we know one thing about cities, then perhaps it is that they are too vast to be imagined in their entirety: that is, as *a* city. … Nor can cities be understood as if they were only the sum of their parts. They are not the sum of roads + buildings + money + people + … plus whatever. For cities are more than the inventory of things to be found in them, precisely because they are also about the social relations that constitute them. Cities are never static, or complete, ready to be held frozen in some timeless encyclopedia of facts and fictions. (2000: xix, italics original)

Pile and Thrift's assertion is in agreement with the claim of the urban geographer Tim Hall: '[t]he only consistent thing about cities is that they are always changing' (1998: 1). This means that people's needs and views are affected when alterations take place in city-spaces and vice versa. Therefore, physical arrangements of the city, for example, may become redundant if they do not serve people's needs sooner than planners would expect; or, in other cases, new arrangements may be needed because of an increased demand for housing or an open public space.

Besides the large scale of cities, the density of population living in the urban centres, and the multiple needs, desires and aspirations existing in the urban environment make the production and function of city-spaces a complicated issue. The urban geographer David Kaplan observes that '[t]he world has become urban' (2004: 1) and he refers to the fact that 'the mid-1990s marked the first time that more than 50

percent of the world's then 5.8 billion people were living in urban areas. Today [2004], the world's urban population numbers more than 3.2 billion of the 6.2 billion people on the earth' (2004: 1). The fact that more than half of the earth's population lives in urban areas renders urban space an exciting opportunity for human contact, but at the same time a problematic case for space-sharing.

Loretta Lees notes that 'the scale of contemporary urbanization is unprecedented. This century, even more than the last, will be an urban one in which the city is the measure of the civility and sustainability of society' (2004: 3). Cities can be seen as spaces in which diversity, tolerance, progressiveness and inventiveness are welcomed, as Lees observes: '[t]he city has long been celebrated as an emancipatory space/place in the social imaginary of the West' (2004: 5). Cities carry with them associations with democracy and people's empowerment that find their roots to antiquity; '[t]he classical legacy is inscribed into the very etymology of the word city, which comes from the Latin *civitas*, which meant the body of citizens rather than the place or settlement type where they were gathered' (2004: 5, italics original), Lees notes. However, cities can also be considered as spaces that control and restrict human action and initiative, spontaneity and inventiveness; spaces of alienation and fear. In her study *The Emancipatory City?* (2004), in which she introduces the imperative of a utopian dimension within the urban studies discourse,[7] Lees claims that although 'utopian hopes for the city date back to antiquity […] they are now more urgent than ever before' (2004: 3). She proposes that the city 'still lies at the heart of many utopian conceptions of democracy, tolerance, and self-realization' and she examines 'possibilities of the city as a space or site for emancipation' (2004: 3).

There are three main reasons that have turned my attention to the meaning of the urban. First, is that theatre is strongly connected with urban space; 'theatre is the most urban of cultural forms' (2002: 96), as Garner argues. Second, all the cases presented in this thesis are located in London that is a world city, the urban space of which holds a significant impact on global politics, economies and culture. Third, I suggest that if we revisit concepts and practices of urban space and attempt to understand them through performance, then we can possibly re-define urban space and

[7] Lees distinguishes her utopian urban vision from Michel Foucault's 'heterotopia'; Foucault identifies 'counter-sites' as 'a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (1986: 24). Lees points out that the utopian derives from the literal sense of the word 'u-topia', that is, 'no-place in particular'; and although this meaning contributes to the challenging implementation of utopian ideals to existing urban spaces, it at the same time enables an expanded imagination (2004: 6).

magnify its emancipatory potential. The way that city-spaces are designed by planners and architects forms a significant parameter in the way that people experience the city; as this directly affects the materiality of the city, its circulation systems, and its aesthetics as well as implying, or openly dictating, the use of its spaces. Therefore, the investigation of aspects of urban planning and architecture, the driven forces of planners and architects, as well as the effects of the materialisation of architectural concepts on the urban environment, is considered essential for an understanding of the urban environment. The diagnosis of urban problems through urban planning and architecture can offer an insight into the ways that urban renewal is pursued and where the possibilities of more liveable cities and urban change exist.

Performance spaces, whether these are theatre buildings or spaces temporarily used for a performance event, are mainly situated in the urban environment, they are inhabited by people of the city (theatre workers, performers and so on) and they are visited by people of the city (audience). Theatre as a practice and as a physical space is integrated with urban life and structure, it is 'in some ways symptomatic of urban process' (2009b: 7), as Harvie puts it. Theatre takes part within the wider context of urban environment functions, at times serving the purpose of a space for leisure, at others of a cultural institution and at others of a space for discovery. Depending on where and how theatre happens, either it confirms the urban space, in the sense that it holds its expected place and function in it; or it questions and even denies the structures imposed on urban space, by moving, for example, beyond its spatial boundaries and the uses inscribed on them. In any case, and this is something that I argue throughout the thesis, theatre acts and reacts in a continuous dialogue with the urban surroundings and produces meanings related not only to the theatre practice itself, but to the urban space as a whole. As a result, theatre affects the way the urban environment is understood and experienced, and in effect produces the city itself; as Harvie argues, 'theatre *is a part of* urban process, producing urban experience and thereby producing the city itself' (2009b: 7, italics original). Therefore, in order to discuss the impact of theatre performance on city-spaces and urban life in general, we should look at the main concepts and practices that govern urban planning and architecture.

The designing and planning process of urban space becomes a complicated matter to professionals dealing with its built features directly, to theoreticians attempting to analyse its arrangements and meanings, and most of all to people who

live within it and experience it in their everyday life. The attempt of urban planning to order and organise urban space entails the negotiation of different needs and interests, whilst tension and conflict are unavoidable in cases where interests clash. Cities' complexity, and therefore their planning difficulty, is intensified in view of globalisation, which requires cities' economies to be interconnected and interdependent, maximising competition and the search for profit-making investments. The sophisticated development of technology enables communication and the realisation of highly intricate structures and machines, but also maximises control over space. Furthermore, city planning has to confront and deal with the increasing concern of environmental issues that shout for sustainable developments that diminish the impact of the human intervention in the environment and restrain the exhaustion of natural resources.

Although, nowadays, spatial professionals seek to recognise and enhance the positive aspects of the urban, looking at a new kind of urbanism (see Lees 2004), contemporary urban planning follows to some extent the same basic principles as in the past. Professionals involved in urban planning, urban planners, landscape architects, architects, as well as governmental agents aim to bring order within city-spaces, offering a safe environment for citizens, and at the same time creating a controllable environment. They often accomplish political ambitions, whilst they project cultural or aesthetic ideals. As Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout exemplify, since ancient times the organisation and structure of the built environment has always attempted to serve a variety of purposes; the walls, for example, surrounding a city sought to offer 'safety and protection for the people of the city', but also they depicted a 'political unity of the city-state' (2003: 299). Elements such as roads and bridges 'met the practical social needs of the urban population' and at the same time they 'fulfilled the power aspirations of the urban elites in particular' (LeGates and Stout: 299). Monumental constructions appeared serving both spiritual and political dimensions of city life: 'ancient citadels were centers of religious meaning, as well as economic and political power' (2003: 299).

Contemporary city planning has been affected by the range of issues that emerged from the industrialisation of cities during the 19th and 20th centuries and their consequent deindustrialisation. Problems such as the overcrowding of urban centres, which were not sufficient to serve the high number of population moving to cities, the lack of urban infrastructure, the demand for sanitisation of the urban setting, required

planning solutions that dictated concepts and practices that can still be evident in contemporary urban planning. For example, the improvement of the water supply and sewage systems, because of threats to public health,[8] constituted such a critical moment for urban planning and has affected how cities have been designed and function thereafter. The role of plumbing in cities' cleanliness and hygiene introduced by the architect Adolf Loos in 1898 – which I will further discuss in the fourth chapter – connected with modernity, verticality and order, had a powerful impact on later architecture, mainly characterised by rationalised designs at the beginning of the 20th century. A prominent example of modern thinking of architecture is Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (1887-1965), known as Le Corbusier, whose projects and ideas as well as the principles of the International Congress of Modern Architecture, which he established, influenced greatly the work of architects in the following years. His concepts, his built projects, as well as his unfulfilled proposals had an enormous impact on architecture and urban design in the 20th century (see Le Corbusier 1998).[9]

Jane Jacobs, in her seminal work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), opened a way of thinking about cities in terms of their liveability – how cities can become more diverse and respond to human visions and needs. Jacobs passionately opposed orthodox city planning that followed Le Corbusier's principles. She argued for diversity in the city since she believed that this would advance public life; she says: '[t]he ubiquitous principle is the need of cities for a most intricate and close-grained diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support, both economically and socially' (1961: 14). And she claimed that 'unsuccessful city areas are areas' that 'lack this kind of intricate mutual support', suggesting that 'the science of city planning and the art of city design, in real life for real cities, must become the science and art of catalysing and nourishing these close-grained working relationships' (1961: 14). Jacobs raised crucial issues about making a city habitable and which had been overlooked by the trends that followed Le Corbusier's tradition. Although diversion has often been interpreted by urban planners and investors as a chance for proceeding with their ambitious built projects without considering people's needs and quality of life, diversity in Jacob's terms is vital for cities. Through the examination of

[8] For a discussion on body, cleanliness and cities' design in the 18th century European cities, see Richard Sennett's *Flesh and Stone* (1994).

[9] A highlight of his incomplete proposals – which is fortunate that remained incomplete since this would have destroyed a range of remarkable buildings, imposing a constricting uniformity – was the total demolition of the centre of Paris and its rebuilding following a geometrical arrangement of characteristic skyscrapers.

diverse uses of city-spaces, urban space can become a setting where planning emerged from the way people interact with the built environment.

Jacobs's contemporary, urban planner Kevin Lynch, carried out fieldwork with his team in which they visited, on foot, selected central areas of three American cities, in order to analyse how people perceive their built environment and how built structures affect their life within the city. They observed and mapped the urban spatial elements, and at the same time they held interviews with residents and people employed in the area, asking them also to present sketches with the image of their city area. His findings, as well as his methods, have widely been used in the process of urban planning and constitute part of the language of urban design. For example, the organisation of the physical forms of the urban environment under the five categories: 'paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks' (1960: 46) is attributed to him. Lynch intended to examine the way that the appearance and the relationship of the physical elements and materials of the city affect the inhabitants. In his seminal book *The Image of the City* (1960), he employed the term 'imageability' in order to investigate the physical qualities of the city that evoke a strong image in the observer's mind (1960: 9). Lynch claimed city planning should offer a degree of coherence, which provides people with a sense of security, emotional as well as physical, and at the same time it should intensify and stimulate the human experience, producing an environment that offers sensuous delight and choice. Also, he emphasised that it is significant not only to study how inhabitants perceive the city's image, but also to create an urban environment that the inhabitant is able to change: '[t]he image should preferably be open-ended, adaptable to change, allowing the individual to continue to investigate and organize reality: there should be blank spaces where he can extend the drawing for himself' (1960: 9).

Lynch's stance exemplifies how urban planning is a two-way process; it depends on planners and architects as well as inhabitants. However, this is not always easy to negotiate and often urban design is highly conditioned by choices taken by the professionals dealing with the urban landscape. Even if spatial professionals' choices intend to have a positive impact on the city and people's life, they may provoke, or exacerbate, problematic aspects of the city life. As LeGates and Stout assert 'urban design is never value-free' (2003: 411). Thus, for example, the improvement of traffic flow may be achieved at the expense of pedestrian-friendly walkways; historical sites may be in danger of pollution or demotion as the surrounding area changes its

character and intensity; sustaining the city's economic competitiveness may mean that natural landscapes go under threat or that people's population is displaced.

Problems that arose from the deindustrialisation of the cities in the western world, which emerged in the second half of the previous century, played a significant part in the strategies developed for cities' renewal. The extended urban and social problems occurred in cities, for the reason that factories and manufacture businesses closed down (see Hall 1998: 31-32), often resulted to the abandonment of buildings and the emergence of run-down areas within the city. The existence of derelict spaces and deserted areas in the urban environment is still a problematic issue in contemporary western cities. How these are considered by urban planners determines the future of these sites to a great extent. Usually, the decaying sites are characterised as 'wastelands'; they are no more than signs of waste, which need to be extinguished. This issue is considered central to this thesis and I examine aspects of the meaning of dereliction through the case studies I employ, specifically in chapter two and four, in order to demonstrate how the notion of performance can alter our preconceptions about ruined spaces.

In contemporary cities, the phenomenon of the lack of a wider strategic urban planning is also ascertained. This has led to an architectural competition of diversity and multiplication of styles of built constructions, which also testify to the central role of large investment and development companies in the formation of urban design. As Hall observes, many run-down areas of western cities have been most-liked sites for redevelopment (see Hall 1998). Thus, for example, the district of Docklands in East London – in which two of the sites examined in this thesis are situated – has attracted the interest of development companies. As I discuss in the following chapter, the area's redesigning has resulted in a series of large-scale constructions with distinctive architectural styles that did not conform with a wider planning strategy. In cases where there has been no planning scheme to which the developers should comply, impressive mega-structures appear and urban landscapes become fragmented.

Harvey suggests that the fragmentation of urban design is a symptom of postmodernism. He claims that '[p]ostmodernism cultivates […] a conception of the urban fabric as necessarily fragmented, a "palimpsest" of past forms superimposed upon each other, and a "collage" of current uses, many of which may be ephemeral', and he declares that 'postmodernists design rather than plan' (1989: 66). It is worth noting that there is an ongoing debate about postmodernism and modernism, and as

Harvey argues the meaning of the 'postmodern' term is ambiguous, representing 'some kind of reaction to, or departure from, "modernism"', but because 'the meaning of modernism is also very confused, the reaction or departure known as "postmodernism" is doubly so' (1989: 7). Despite the ambiguity of the two terms, their distinction can help us to make some useful observations; thus, modern design can be characterised as homogeneous and functional, encouraging functional zones and seeing cities as totalities, whilst postmodern can be characterised as fragmented and chaotic, a spectacular collage of spatial elements.

London is one of the world cities where spectacular architecture has gained ground. Collages of mega-structures have raised during the last decades, aiming to correspond to the demands and power entailed in a global city such as London. New constructions and the reconstruction of old ones mainly aim to reinforce a new, worldwide identity to London that is mainly ruled by capitalist practices. Many studies have focused on the analysis of London as a world city, such as Pamela Gilbert's *Imagined Londons* (2002) that concerns London's evolution from the 19th century to the present day, and includes views from a variety of disciplines. The beginning of the new millennium was marked by the initiation of ambitious architectural projects (such as the Millennium Dome);[10] as Pamela Gilbert notes:

> The millennium was marked by the apportionment of considerable funding devoted to marking London's self-conscious march into the new era, through events, new architecture, and an overhauling of earlier structures to bring the city in line with its "new," "old" image. (2002: 9)

Postmodern cities are frequently characterised by an increasing flow of information, fragmentation and global communication, governed by capitalist priorities, spatial constraints and consumption. Heterogeneity in cities entails difference and otherness, but also chaos; thus, within cities conflicting feelings of fear and hope can be ascertained. The large-scale of cities can ensure an anonymity that promotes some form of independency, but also alienation. In the name of a safe urban environment surveillance and control devices have been developed (see, for example, Toon 2000), whilst privatisation of public space has been increased (see, for example, Kohn 2004).

[10] And which have lately been intensified because of the forthcoming Olympic Games that will take place in London in 2012.

The empirical observation has inspired contemporary research on urban space and publication of collection of studies, such as Karen Franck and Quentin Stevens' *Loose Space* (2007) and Lars Frers and Lars Meier' *Encountering Urban Places* (2007), in which urban space is explored from a variety of perspectives. Both aforementioned studies investigate how the meaning ascribed to urban space is directly connected with activities that take or do not take place in city-spaces. The cases discussed in both publications demonstrate that space is not exclusively (re)produced by spatial professionals but also through the desires, needs and choices of the city's inhabitants, who can practically alter the use and purpose of its spaces (see, for example, Altay 2007).[11] Whether the city-users reaffirm or reject the elements of the city, they can potentially change the conventional way of producing space, and contest pre-given ideas and arrangements through unplanned activities and actions.

1.4 The performativity of space

The notions of performance and performativity have influenced many disciplines such as feminist philosophy, social sciences and anthropology. Also, they have been used as conceptual tools for spatial disciplines, such as cultural geography (see, for example, Nash 2000) and critical human geography (see, for example, Gregson and Rose 2000). The concept of performativity has been developed within the field of linguistics by John L. Austin, who established the difference between constative and performative utterances (see Johnston et al. 2000: 578). In naming some utterances 'performative', Austin referred to the ability of language to perform an action rather than merely describe it (see Harvie 2009b: 45). There are different approaches to theorising performance and performativity. Two main thinkers whose work has encouraged the appropriation of these terms in fields other than performance are Erving Goffman (see Goffman 1959) and Judith Butler (see Butler 1990 and Butler 1995). In discussing social phenomena, Goffman used the term 'performance' in its fundamental meaning as a durational set of actions carried out by an individual, and which takes place in front of others – the observers. In Butler's more recent theory, she argues that social identities are constructed through action instead of being pre-givens.

[11] Deniz Altay in her chapter 'Urban Spaces Re-Defined in Daily Practices – "Minibar", Ankara' investigates how young people see streets in Ankara as an opportunity for leisure activities, and transform them into recreational spaces. Thus, she exemplifies how urban environment is re-defined by the daily practices of inhabitants.

However, as JD Dewsbury says '[p]erformativity is a slippery term', and although it is related to performance 'the performative slips across, beyond, and through' performance interpretations (2000: 475). 'The performative is the gap, the rupture, the spacing that unfolds the next moment allowing change to happen' (2000: 475), says Dewsbury. This metaphorical way of defining performativity allows us to think of the performativity of space as an unpredictable and unfixed milieu which is always subjected to the possibility of change. Space comes into existence through performance; the performance of people interacting with space and the performance of the built space itself within the materiality of the city. Thus, the function of built spaces may follow predetermined concepts and rules, but through their interaction with people they may attain different purposes or meanings. The engagement of space with performativity brings into the discussion possibilities for subversion, disruption and multiplicity. Since the notion of performativity suggests agency and subjectivity, the possibilities for personal action and involvement are entailed in the production of space.

Thrift has developed 'non-representational theory or the theory of practices' (1997: 126), influenced by writers such as Walter Benjamin and Michel de Certeau, and also by the way that performance can be used as a metaphor in humanities and social theories. Thrift argues for an analysis which goes beyond representation and semiotic readings of space that had prevailed within geographical and social discourse, and incorporates bodily practices and sensual experiences. His non-representational theory encapsulates the principles of 'practices, mundane everyday practices, that shape the conduct of human beings towards others and themselves in particular sites' (1997: 126-127). His theory is not 'concerned with representation and meaning, but with the performative "presentations", "showings" and "manifestations" of everyday life' (1997: 127). It proposes a way of reflecting 'on practices that cannot adequately be spoken of, that words cannot capture, that texts cannot convey – on forms of experience and movement that are not only or never cognitive' (2000: 655), as Nash explains. For Thrift, geographical discourse should go beyond the constitution of rationalised and descriptive meaning, towards a meaning that includes practices and knowledge which are non-representational.

Drawing on Thrift, Lees aims at conceiving 'a more critical and politically progressive geography of architecture' (2001: 53). She advocates that a critical geography of architecture should 'acknowledge that much in the world is not

discursive' (2001: 56) and she suggests that, 'in their focus on the symbolic meaning of landscape as sign or as text, geographers have had relatively little to say about the practical and affective' (2001: 53). In order to analyse Vancouver's new Public Library building, apart from the cultural readings of the symbolism of the library's design, Lees employs an ethnographic approach, so as to expand beyond representational meanings to the active engagement with the building. She attempts to bring into the geography of architectural discussion, which has been mostly occupied with producing symbolic and abstract meanings, the importance of examining the way that architecture is inhabited. Thus, she examines the ambiguity of the library's design, but also how the library's spaces are practically used, including her own use of the library, and how these produce new meanings and contest a priori given theoretical significations and values. Her approach treats space not as 'a passive stage for the rehearsal and re-presentation of predetermined social scripts', but as an 'alive and integral, inextricably connected to and mutually constitutive of the meanings and cultural politics being worked out within it' (2001: 71-72). Although Lees recognises that a critical reflection on representational meanings of architecture is essential for examining their social and political implications, she explains that 'so too are the ways in which they are enacted, performed and often subverted' (2001: 72). Hence, '[i]nstead of asking what the library *means*, I began also to consider what it *does*' (2001: 71, italics original), she says. We could say that this brings this way of examining buildings closer to a performative analysis.

The adoption of the notion of performance by other disciplines in humanities calls us to think the possibilities of performance in attaining 'new forms of knowledge'; Thrift and Dewsbury suggest that performance's imaginative practices can offer to geography new methods and 'a whole range of techniques for making the world more alive, techniques that both extend the range of current work and provide means of sensing new forms of knowledge' (2000: 424). Thus, space can be regarded as changeable and dynamic, instead of being considered as a motionless and abstract representation: 'performance allows us to treat space as an active operator, rather than a passive sign standing for something else' (2000: 427), they say. Therefore, in the context of this thesis, I have sought to untangle aspects of spatial parameters that play a significant role in the production of meaning and in the process of generating knowledge, not only in the performance realm, but also in the considerably complex

built environment of urban life, and explore how these meanings interact, produce, limit or liberate each other, participating in the experience of urban space.

The performativity of space suggests that its meaning is persistently unfixed and unfinished; it is dependent on human action and on time processes. Looking at space through performance opens a fertile ground where questions about space and its meaning can be studied. The performance of space and the spatialities of performance contribute to approaches that attempt to enrich our understanding of built environment and the relation of space, city and performance. The notion of performance can be particularly productive when it is applied to architecture and urban space; the examination of what urban space 'does' and how urban space makes us 'do' can move the discussion away from fixed spatial meanings. If space comes into existence through its performativity, then meanings are related to the performances of buildings and their users.

The form, function and meaning of buildings are influenced by their design and the architectural choices this entails, but, as I seek to exemplify and analyse in the thesis, these are not determined by them. For it is the use of buildings, the life of buildings in time, the spatial practices that occur in the built environment that reinforce or contest the meaning of built structures; which comply to the form or re-shape it; which correspond to or reject their assigned function. Therefore, I would like to consider architecture as performative, following what Lees argues: '[a]rchitecture is about more than just representation. Both as a practice and a product, it is performative, in the sense that it involves ongoing social practices through which space is continually shaped and inhabited' (2001: 53). How the building is occupied and used is an essential part of its meaning and significance that can supersede its form and its representational function. Performativity emphasises the indeterminacy of space that derives from its use and its materiality.

1.4.1 Towards a performative architecture

Buildings are not only the products of certain conceptions, the form and design of which represent a symbolic meaning, but they are a medium through which experiences are produced; and, at the same time, those experiences affect the form and meaning of buildings. The architecture of built structures plays a significant part in the urban phenomena, since it can reproduce or challenge social roles and reinforce or discourage urban change. If we follow Lefebvre's core argument, then, space is not

merely the product of mental and material processes, but also the medium of social relations, and in this sense, we are all producers of urban space. The production of physical space is not the exclusive privilege of spatial professionals, architects, planners or designers, and neither is architecture an autonomous process that constructs a kind of urban sculpture.

However, as the writers of *The Unknown City* (2000) state: '[t]oo often, architecture is designed (and consequently comprehended) as a purely aesthetic or intellectual activity, ignoring social relations and rendering people passive' (Borden et al. 2000: 3-4). Iain Borden in his innovative study *Skateboarding, Space and the City* (2001) recognises that although architectural historians have attempted to shake underlined conventions in the architectural discourse, their work continues to 'remain within the architectural canon of such "great" male architects as Le Corbusier and Loos, consequently leaving the core object of study unchallenged' (Borden 2001: 8). Due to the fact that architects' and architectural theoreticians' attention is to examine the building-object, and because they often exclude from their conception and practice social relations and wider urban meanings, architectural history has largely focused on issues of representation and has been characterised by depoliticisation (see Borden 2001). Also, the ideological divisions that infiltrate theoretical discourse contribute to the fragmentation of space, affirming Lefebvre's assertion that the increasing specialisation of spatial professionals and theorists render space broken (1991: 89).

Architectural and urban studies, such as the collection of essays *Occupying Architecture* (1998), have critiqued the role of the architect and have attempted to detach architecture from its often elitist status, introducing the way that architecture is (re)produced through buildings' users. The contributors of *Occupying Architecture* attempt to untangle how and for which reasons the user is often ignored and excluded from architectural discourse and design. Architects are usually anxious about unpredictable use of their designed spaces and often consider any creative intervention to be shaking their authority and endangering their authorship. 'Architecture is, it appears, demeaned by its association with habit and the presence of the user is perceived as a direct threat to the authority of the architect' (1998: 3), Jonathan Hill observes. Hill specifies that architectural professionals attempt to protect their territory in two ways, first 'by deriding incursions from "outside" as ignorant or mistaken, implying there is a truthful and correct interpretation of a fixed body of knowledge, to which they alone have access' (1998: 5). And second, by providing the products and

practices of architects 'with an iconic status and cultural value, in order to suggest that only the work of architects deserves the title "architecture"' (1998: 5). Hill goes even further in order to make evident the separation and confrontation between architect and the user or 'illegal' architect, by asserting that for the professional architect the 'illegal' architect and user are considered as 'dirt':

> […] architects attempt to prevent two instructions, one into the body of *their* profession, the other into the body of *their* architecture. The former occurs when the work of an 'illegal' architect is recognized as architecture. The latter occurs when the user occupies architecture. For the architect, the illegal architect and the user are analogous to dirt. They are matter out of place. (1998: 5, italics original)

Hill's claim recalls Mary Douglas's famous study on dirt 'as matter out of place' (1978: 35) – and on which I expand in the fourth chapter of the thesis – and emphasises how the presence of the user, or the invention of an 'illegal' architect are considered as 'out of place'. The user is somewhere that they should not be. It disturbs the system that the architect has carefully thought and designed, even though without often considering the unanticipated desires and actions of the user, or their very presence. The 'illegal' architect disturbs codes and patterns established by the architectural profession, and confuses architectural meanings. Hill suggests that compared to other disciplines architecture presents a weakness, in that it cannot sustain 'internal self-validating codes that safely protect its members and exclude "ignorant" outsiders' (1998: 5), and this constitutes a threat to the architect. Therefore, 'architects assume that architecture is a physical phenomenon with specific materials and dimensions, a building but not any building, *their* building *unoccupied*' (1998: 5, italics original). However, although '[t]he term "architect" is enshrined in law', as Hill says, '[f]ortunately, the word "architecture" has no such legal protection' (1998: 6). Possibly, this is the chance of architecture to be regarded as a wider concept or practice that comes into existence through people and not exclusively through architectural professionals. The user, or 'illegal' architect, should be considered as the one that makes architectural space alive; since she/he is not subjected to follow architectural programmes, which are often controlled by rigid rules and codes, she/he can interpret meanings otherwise, subvert or question established conventions, and offer architectural space imagination and liveliness.

In order for architecture to move beyond representation and conceptualisation of space, it needs to integrate the processes that produce space and at the same time it

needs to be considered as 'the site of imagination, of experience, of critical re-examination' (Borden 2001: 9). If we think that architecture is a process, then, it becomes changeable, dynamic and responding, and we can even say potentially more democratic. The editors of *The Unknown City* (2000) call us to see architecture 'not as an object, not as a thing, but as a flow – or, more properly, as a flow within other flows – the merely apparent pattern of a much more complex set of forces, dynamics, and interrelations within the space of the city' (Borden et al. 2000: 20). Architecture is not an abstract representation of space but it is (re)created and (re)shaped through living: 'architecture, like all other cultural objects, is not made just once, but is made and remade over and over again each time it is represented through another medium, each time different people experience it' (1996: v), as Adrian Forty observes.

Usually architecture is associated with permanent and solid structures, however, as Tuan suggests there are cases where shelters have to be built and re-built in a short period of time,[12] contesting in that way the idea of long-lasting architectural forms. Whilst in recent times, contemporary examples, such as those presented in the collection *Temporary Urban Spaces* (2006), depict how architecture can be realised in more ephemeral terms. Although space and time are interdependent and inseparable (see Harvey 1989 and Massey 2005), architectural practice attempts to resist the flow of time and its impact on space. Usually architecture tries to arrest time and its effects. Jeremy Till in his book *Architecture Depends* (2009) argues for architecture's contingency and dependency, and discusses why and how the contingent should be employed by architectural practice, instead of being denied. He suggests 'time as the primary context for architecture' (2009: 96), and he proposes that it is through time that architecture's contingency can be untangled:

> […] if time is the primary context for architecture, and if the context of time is one of contingency and uncertainty, then it is the first context out of which we can begin to develop notions of how to deal with that contingency: to understand architecture as a contingent discipline, one must grapple with an understanding of time. (2009: 96)

The impact of time on the built structures may be manifested in changes of built spaces' use, or in alterations of their material appearance. Both of these situations constitute a challenge for the architect. Most often the framework that an architect works on attempts to minimise any unexpected occurrences and changes. Till adopts

[12] Such as, for example, aboriginal persons' igloo or tepee (Tuan 1977: 103).

the term ‘entropy’, which is associated with the law of Thermodynamics, in order to describe ‘a condition of ongoing uncertainty and with it the potential decline into disorder’ and he points out that ‘entropy is potentially the most upsetting to architects’ (2009: 104). However, he advocates that these entropic forces that surround built space are what the architect needs to accept and collaborate with; and for this to happen architectural priorities should change. ‘The architect starts what time and others continue’, Till says:

> Architecture is subjected not only to the elemental forces of time (the weather, physical decay) but also to the social forces of time (users, changing function, economic obsolescence). But this entropy does not overrule the possibility of collaborating with it. In fact it reinforces it. The architect starts what time and others continue. Entropic time is seen not as an affront, but as a partner in a process of design that continues long after the architect has left the scene. However, to accept this collaboration demands a change in architectural priorities away from architecture as a frozen moment of “completion,” and toward an acceptance of what Lars Lerup calls “building the unfinished.” This does not necessarily mean literally, physically, unfinished but unfinished in the sense that it allows “for the possibility of appropriation” by its users. (2009: 106-107)

Although I find Till’s suggestion that an architectural construction plays its own role within urban life after the architect has completed his part useful, I would like to think of the architect, not as the originator of built space, but as one among other (everyday) producers of space who continue what time and others initiate. In this way the architect abandons some of his authoritarian role and achieves a closer proximity to space’s users and entropic time. If we accept Till’s proposal of thinking about a ‘temporalized space – space full of time’ – and not ‘spatialized time’ which ‘inevitably leads in the reification and aestheticization to a completely emasculated versions of time’ (2009: 96) – then we should acknowledge the processes in time that make space exist. The idea of the unfinished space can be particularly productive, for it not only leaves room for new theoretical interpretations, but it also practically sets the built structure in the middle of social and time processes, and gives the user the chance to contribute to the production of architectural space implementing her/his imagination and inventiveness.

The connection of architecture with time hints at a rather performative evaluation of architecture. Dorita Hannah, the Commissioner of the Architecture Section in The Prague Quadrennial 2011, opposes the conventional idea that ‘architecture should and does disappear once the lights are lowered and a performance

begins' (Hannah and Horešovská www). She emphasises that architecture has always a dynamic presence within the performance space, and plays an active role in the production and reception of the performance, 'supporting, enhancing, resisting, and even thwarting the dynamics of live communication' (Hannah and Horešovská www). 'Space is a performer that precedes action – as action' (Hannah and Horešovská www), Hannah says. And she gives a performative description of architecture:

> […] architecture is "slow performance": heating up and cooling down, flexing and decaying; affected by fluctuations in light, temperature and weather; accruing and shedding over time. Temporality is therefore key to recasting architecture as a performative entity. We need no longer regard architecture as fixed and timeless but can now approach it as an assemblage of manifold spaces of and in time. (Hannah and Horešovská www)

Architecture is not merely an object, and an object that derives from professionals' expertise. It is an ongoing time-based process. And in this sense, I am interested in the performative aspects of architecture: the ambiguities of architecture; and, where and when architecture fails. By this I mean when architecture becomes disconnected from the intentions of professionals, where it becomes detached from notions of permanency and stability, and where uncertainty comes into frame. Architecture is a manifestation of junction points of urban stories; stories that derived from spatial professionals, inhabitants and users. The editors of *The Unknown City* give a rather theatrical definition of architecture: '[a]rchitecture is ambient and atmospheric, and architecture allows us to tell stories – it is both backdrop to and inspiration for theoretical and poetic musings of all kinds, from love to philosophy, theology to Marxism' (Borden et al. 2000: 3). For me architecture not only inspires stories, but it is also the product of those stories. I want to see architectural structures as the material manifestation of the meeting points of spatial stories that originate from a variety of directions and producers-storytellers. Some of these stories that can be told for and through architectural structures, I intend to explore throughout the thesis; as well as how architecture is in a constant process of being produced and performed.

1.5 Outline of the thesis chapters

This thesis advocates that performance is a way of re-defining urban space, a way of taking authorship of city-spaces and responding, thinking and reimagining them creatively. I am interested in the fractures that appear within the tendency of producing permanent structures that are often considered as superior or monumental.

Thus, I examine spaces of London through their performative potential and I attempt to draw on practices and meanings that can contribute to a wider understanding of urban space. On the one hand, exploring the performative qualities of space bestows on space the notion of creativity, and removes it from notions of fixity and unchangeability. On the other hand, theatre performance and performative urban actions give us the chance to interpret the city otherwise and offer another meaning to our engagement with the city. Through the case studies that this thesis employs, I aim to examine what built environment and architecture *do* and how performance shapes our understanding and evokes our imagination and also heightens our awareness of the urban space we live in.

I look at four different types of spaces within London, each one of which has a particular significance because it awaits, or has been affected by, the implementation of redevelopment plans. I also aim to show how performance creates new meanings for city-spaces and for their potentiality. I suggest that performance emancipates space and contributes to an imaginative as well as social production of space. I will start my discussion with the geographically adjacent sites, situated north of the River Thames: the derelict building of 21 Wapping Lane and the area of Wapping; and I will move to the south of the river where I will examine the contemporary landmarks of London: Tate Modern and the National Theatre. The sites selected and their examination through performances that took place within them offer the ground to investigate the multiple meanings of city-spaces, and to suggest another way not only of reading the city but also speaking it, and of altering the meaning of its spaces.

The second chapter of the thesis examines the implications of using the neglected 21 Wapping Lane building as a performance space. The disused warehouse, located within the London Docklands complex, was used by Punchdrunk Theatre Company for their performance *Faust*, which took place in 2006-2007. The brick four-storey warehouse chosen for the production was not a theatre landmark and it was not even located within a known theatre district of London. The site was protected from any intrusion of visitors by railings, a tall brick wall and barbed wire and was not open to the public. However, it attracted a large audience when *Faust* took place in its spaces and its derelict state contributed to the creation of an unusual experience for the theatre audience that was used to attend performances in conventional theatres. The building was demolished in 2010, giving space to new ambitious constructions of luxury residential apartments. The redevelopment plans were proposed by Eulysees

Limited and PDP Architects. It is worth noting that Eulysees Limited is part of Ballymore Properties Ltd which co-sponsored the performance of *Faust*. Considering the role the theatre event played in making a neglected building 'perform', or be 'inhabited' again (even temporarily), can open up a discussion about the function of derelict city-spaces.

The employment of the 21 Wapping Lane building for the performance of *Faust* puts under question the notion of disused sites to be categorised as 'useless' or 'wastelands', whilst it brings into the debate the way that derelict sites are often forced to 'enter' the city's functionality. This chapter investigates to what extent the performance *Faust* shifts ideas about derelict spaces associated with waste, emptiness and inactivity. And in view of the demolition of the 21 Wapping Lane building, and the future grand plans that take place on the site, the chapter examines the driving forces and the implications of extinguishing derelict spaces from the cityscape. I argue that the re-engagement of the audience with the urban landscape through a performance that adopts a neglected space for performance challenges attempts to categorise space and to determine its function within the cityscape. The imaginative use of neglected sites is a practical manifestation of giving space 'a chance'. The chance to be open to possibilities and to the multiple ways of experiencing it.

The third chapter discusses the effects of the individual's journey through the area of Wapping, where physical space is directly experienced in the course of a walk by an audience listening to *Wapping:audio* (launched in 2005). The voice of a narrator guides the audience-participant through the streets of Wapping, witnessing details that indicate the past history of the Wapping area, whilst she/he also experiences renovated built elements that declare Wapping's present. *Wapping:audio* brings the audience in direct contact with urban space, the materiality of its built structures and the uses of them. The complexity of the urban environment becomes the focus of the audience's attention. The audience member is invited to edit and recompose the city through their experience of the walk; she/he collects information about the city, but most importantly she/he has the chance to imagine the city otherwise. The journey ends opposite 21 Wapping Lane. Therefore, the examination of the spaces the audience experiences through the audio-walk also enriches our understanding and analysis of the derelict warehouse, because of the physical proximity of *Wapping:audio* course to the 21 Wapping Lane site.

The *Wapping:audio* walk offers a way to understand the city and generate spaces from the ground – not considering them from above, or at a distance. The participant's experience of the audio-walk is embedded in space and its processes, and confirms that urban space is not detached from urban activities, priorities, concepts and practices, but is produced through people's engagement with it. The audience not only witnesses the process of urban production, but participates in it. Through the case of *Wapping:audio*, I demonstrate how urban space becomes a source of inspiration, creativity, and at the same time a co-participant. I argue that *Wapping:audio* is a performative response to city-spaces, both in its initial creation as an artistic product as well as in its experience in relation to the audience, which gives the chance to the audience to create its own architecture. Through walking the city and listening to the recorded story, the audience transforms city-spaces with her/his imagination as well as with the choices she/he makes within the route. The experience of the audio-walk acts as a medium of imagining and practising an alternative urban architecture that is composed of streets as spaces for encounters and built space's materiality as a manifestation of spatial stories. It challenges established modes of representation of space as well as priorities and concepts that govern city-spaces, and shows how space can be produced differently through the practice of walking and stories told in, through and about it.

The fourth chapter discusses the outcome of the conversion of the derelict Bankside Power Station into the museum of modern art, Tate Modern. It looks at the decisions taken concerning the leftover and weathered materials which have led to the present exterior and interior architectonic arrangements of the building. The approach, as well as its implications, of preserving the exterior shell of the old power station and the process of cleaning the interior space, emptying it of leftover materials and discarding signs of dirt, is examined in relation to prevailing attitudes towards dirt, art and architecture. Tate Modern's popularity has been followed by proposed plans for the building's dramatic expansion to the south, which have been underway since Tate Modern's tenth anniversary. Therefore, the discussion about Tate Modern's architectural approach attains a particular importance since it can point to issues raised about the practices that may be followed in the new building of Tate Modern. The new construction will be erected on the top of the underground oil tanks of the old power station; thus, whether the oxidised surfaces and the timeworn material will be

maintained becomes an important architectural choice that it will either confirm or challenge dominant architectural approaches towards dirt.

For the purposes of the discussion I examine Doris Salcedo's *Shibboleth* (2007-2008), an artwork-installation that exhibited in the Turbine Hall. *Shibboleth* directly intervened in the structure of the building creating a crack along the length of the Turbine Hall floor. By inscribing a 'negative' space, the artwork brought back to the building signs of dirtiness, messiness and dereliction; thus, I argue, it challenged the building's stability and its protected and clean spaces. The meaning and the experience of the artwork are examined through the lens of ruination and how this affects architectural concepts that govern built spaces and have specifically followed in Tate Modern. I also argue that the architectural practice followed in Tate Modern did not entirely explore the potential of the neglected power station. The lack of dirtiness and of accidental juxtaposition of the derelict building's materials brings the museum closer to the conventions that govern whitewashed, orderly and manageable art spaces in general. I seek to establish that dirt is a source of creativity that offers the chance for an imaginative use and engagement with built spaces. Instead of looking at dirt as a threat to the spatial order and architecture, I suggest that we should look at the uncertainty that dirt involves as a chance to escape from constrictive patterns and categories that cleanliness requires.

The last chapter examines the National Theatre's building and specifically how its exterior architectural elements perform within the cityscape. The National Theatre's building has been a significant landmark in London which, because of its imposing concrete exterior, has raised a series of controversial opinions and discussions since its opening. The architectural design of the building is examined, as well as the architect Denys Lasdun's intentions to create a building open to the public, which is visibly and practically connected with the city landscape. By analysing the architectural and structural elements of the National Theatre's building, its geometrical qualities and its strategic location, I aim to reveal the extent to which the building communicates with the city and its public life, as well as to unpick what meanings it emanates to the public.

The building's dominant structure, its concrete texture and the defined geometrical forms give to the building an imposing and immovable character, which does not easily discard its monumental classification. However, signs of decline appear on its concrete surface and structure, which question its durability and expose

its vulnerability. Besides this, the use of the strata and fly-towers for performances, installations and film projections, makes apparent the link between theatre as an edifice and as a practice, and highlight the National Theatre's connection with the surrounding city-spaces. I argue that despite the issues raised by the building's architecture, and which render to some degree the building impervious, its complex architectural qualities provide opportunities for performative practices that destabilise the building's monumentality. I pursue a performative analysis, especially in relation to the ephemerality of performance, in order to show how the building's inflexibility is challenged and how its dynamic presence is revealed. Thus, I address how ideas of permanency and fixity are contested by signs of decline and material failure that appear on the building's concrete surface. Through a combination of urban, architectural and performative analysis I consider that the nonetheless immovable National Theatre's building can be thoroughly investigated and its connections with the urban landscape can be systematically examined.

The discussion of the National Theatre's building attains a particular importance at present, given the approval of redevelopment plans for the National Theatre's building proposed by Haworth Tompkins architects. The architects' views, evaluation and proposed changes, exemplified in the Conservation Management Plan (2008), are also discussed in the chapter, in an attempt to trace the needs that have led to the prospective decisions and their potential effects on the use of the theatre building's spaces and the experience of the theatre audience as well as of the visitors to the South Bank. Analysing how the building performs at present is a critical tool for imagining and suggesting future changes in relation to the building's structure and function.

This last point is of central importance throughout the thesis. Through the discussion of the aforementioned case studies, I intend to establish how space can be re-defined through performance in order to imagine its everyday use and future otherwise. Furthermore, there is another issue that overarches the case studies employed which is the effect of time on the built structures. Through time city-spaces change their formation and function, and in this way the idea of the fixity of space is contested. I look at two spaces directly connected with dereliction, the warehouse in Wapping Lane and Tate Modern. Although both are situated in central areas of London, the attitude towards these sites differs greatly. The first site was not considered worthy of being preserved and was demolished; whilst the second was

preserved and has maintained its exterior brick shell. Apart from the two buildings employed in this research that directly link with dereliction, marks of weathering and material failure can also be affirmed in the last building examined, the National Theatre. Also, in the *Wapping:audio* tour examined, abandoned elements of the previous use of the area are experienced through the walk.

Derelict sites present a significant field of inquiry, for these spaces physically manifest the transience of space in time; time changes their function and their appearance. Thus, the deterioration of buildings' materials shows the effect of time on space, and how space is under constant transformation. When neglected or ruined sites find themselves in central areas of the city, as in the cases examined in this thesis, their contrast with the functional city-spaces becomes highly apparent, and then architectural and urban planning programs seek to place them back to a tight functional cityscape. This usually involves the demolition of the existing structures and a total reconstruction of the sites, as we will see in the following chapter. However, by examining the qualities and value of ruined spaces within the urban environment, alternative uses of spaces can be ascertained, whilst potential pleasure and alternative ways of thinking about city-spaces can be revealed.

This research intends to shake predetermined ideas of built edifices and the typical urban order, bringing into light questions regarding what shapes the meaning of spaces and what determines their present as well as their future functions. The thesis aims to contribute to the discussion concerning the built space and it claims that through a methodical study of space's architectural qualities and its examination through the lens of performance practices and performative concepts, it is possible to open new means of reflecting on the meaning and use of the urban space. Thus, the urban space confirms its existence as a product of human thought and action. In short, the thesis seeks to establish that re-defining space through performance reveals space's manifold meanings and dynamic presence, and suggests a creative way of producing space.

Chapter 2

Employing a Derelict Space for Performance: 21 Wapping Lane

2. Introduction: *Faust* in a derelict space

In this chapter I examine the ways in which alternative spatial practices in theatre performance question and re-contextualise established ideas concerning the function and categorisation of derelict urban spaces. Derelict spaces can be found in central locations of cities and since there is no official use inscribed on them they are considered as urban voids or wastelands (see Doron 2000 and Edensor 2005). Thus, their re-entering into the city's official functionality is considered crucial and they are often seen as opportunities for high-density developments. The imperfect presence of ruined spaces comes into sharp contrast with the appearance of polished, ordered and regulated spaces in the urban fabric. They do not follow the rhythm, the aesthetics and the production priorities of the city. They stand still, ugly and functionless. They are dangerous and signs of failure. However, because they lack ordinary order and do not comply with the established norms of architectural practice, ruins question the conventional ways of reading and organising the city-space. And it is because they escape formal uses and predicted functions that they offer the chance for unofficial, improvisatory uses. Through their ambiguity and contingency they produce unexpected meanings and exemplify the ambivalence and unpredictability of life.

The theatrical approach of the Punchdrunk production *Faust* provided an imaginative spatial practice to a neglected space 'suitable for nothing' that contested not only established ideas about theatre form and content, but also ideas about the process of planning and the use of city-spaces. The production took place in a disused four-storey warehouse (with a basement), located in Wapping Lane within the London Docklands complex, during the period 2006-2007. *Faust* was produced in collaboration with the National Theatre and it was sponsored by Ballymore Properties Ltd and Lottery Funded through Arts Council England. The artistic direction was by Felix Barrett, the choreography by Maxine Doyle and the design by Robin Harvey. *Faust*'s performance calls us to question and re-consider urban voids and how theatre as spatial practice can re-contextualise prevailing ideas about architecture, spatial practices and the city. This chapter argues that the alternative performance practice of

Faust that adopted the derelict 21 Wapping Lane building as a performance space challenges the uselessness of derelict spaces as well as it brings questions about the practices related to the future of ruins.

2.1 *Faust*: Setting the case

Faust was an ambitious, large-scale performance that used a large proportion of spaces of the rather large 21 Wapping warehouse (fig. 2.1). The cast included 18 actors-dancers, and 11 actors that performed at certain performances and a five-member band. About 25 people worked for the core scenography and construction, and about 65 volunteer design assistants. Punchdrunk[13] won the Critics' Circle Theatre Award for Best Designer 2006 for the production of *Faust*, which was also nominated for the Evening Standard Theatre Awards' Milton Shulman Award for Most Promising Newcomer 2006. *Faust* attracted a large number of audiences; so great was the audience's interest in experiencing the performance that took place in a non-theatre building situated in a 'secret' location that it resulted in the extension of the performance dates. According to *Total Theatre Magazine*, '[b]y the end of its extended run, *Faust* had been seen by more than 28,000 people' (*Total Theatre*: 9).

The feeling of anticipation and excitement was built even before encountering the performance. *Faust* was advertised as 'an indoor promenade performance' that 'takes place at a secret, non-theatre location, half a mile from Tower Bridge' (NT programme Nov.'06 – Jan.'07), whilst directions were provided when booking.[14] The 'secret, non-theatre location' in addition to the unknown and derelict warehouse enhanced audience's expectation as well as their uncertainty. In the case of performances that take place in unconventional spaces, the audience encounter a space, in which they possibly have not been before, and through their visit a new possibility of experiencing theatre is revealed. As Pamela Howard claims: '[w]hen members of an audience take part in a theatre event in a new and unconventional location there is a sense of excitement, an anticipation of a novel experience' (1989: 201).

[13] Punchdrunk's recent work also includes *The Masque of the Red Death* presented at Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) in London (2007); and *Tunnel 228: An Underground Installation* at Tunnel 228 in Waterloo, (2009). Felix Barrett has also co-directed with Tom Morris Tom Stoppard's play *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (2010), presented at the National Theatre's Olivier Theatre.
[14] This was revealed in the NT programme the following period (Jan.–April 2007).

The audience of *Faust* was called to a journey through London before they reached the performance site. The spectator was transformed to an 'urban explorer' (Edensor 2005: 33), whose task was, first, to reach the site by moving through the Wapping area, and second, to explore the unfamiliar 21 Wapping Lane warehouse's spaces. Since the performance did not take place within a recognised theatre district or a tourist area, even though only half a mile from Tower Bridge, the performance site was not easy to find: '21 Wapping Lane is the devil of a place to find' (Mountford www), as a theatre critic observed. Through quiet streets with low, dim streetlights – which corresponded to the performance tone – and with no sign to point towards the performance space, the audience approached the derelict warehouse, which in no way signified a gathering space. At the night of the performance, I was one of those that encountered difficulty finding the site; here is how I documented my journey towards the performance:

> You are going up and down the street, trying to find the number written on the address. It is dark. For a moment you feel lost. And as you are about to call the National Theatre to find out if you have the right address, you meet a group of people that are lost too. You walk all together now. The time is passing and you worry you will not be there on time. One of the group calls a friend of theirs who has been to the performance and by following his instructions you finally find an iron fence door. The iron door leads to a car park. A man is sitting in the darkness; he gives you a nod of encouragement and shows you to go on the right. For a moment you think is this part of the performance? You walk around the big building – you ignore what is used for, it seems abandoned. You cross an open tarmac yard. You see light coming out from an open door. A man is standing this time, and confirms you have arrived in the right place. You leave the rest of the group. Finally, you are there.

The run-down exterior of the warehouse considerably contributed to the creation and experience of the performance. The view of the brick and concrete structure of the building that revealed its skeleton, the iron-railing gate, the broken windows, the tall wall that surrounded the building, stimulated curiosity. It was a space where nothing or anything would be likely to happen in its interiors; its derelict exterior left the possibilities open and intrigued imagination. This supported Punchdrunk's intention: '[t]he audience is invited to rediscover the childlike excitement and anticipation of exploring the unknown, to experience a natural sense of adventure' – as stated in the leaflet given before the performance. The neglected building potentially acted as a space of play, imagination and exploration, bringing similar feelings to those that children who are in a discovery excursion have. The

sense of adventure was, moreover, enhanced by disobeying the sign placed outside the building that warned, 'Dangerous Structure. Keep Out' (fig. 2.2). Felix Barrett adds that the 'nerve-racking entrance'[15] is particularly critical to signify the end of the comfort zone and the beginning of the adventure, he says:

> One thing I always bang on about is that, even if we did a family show, we'd still need that nerve-racking entrance, because you need to reach that point as you're entering that your comfort zone is removed, there's a danger, the adrenalin's coursing through your veins so that your synapses are firing so that any sensory stimuli we then give to you, the audience, you'll receive it tenfold. The impact's greater and it stays with you. It's a basic, very simple device. Cynically, I suppose you could say that that's why people like theme parks and Ghost Trains because it's the same feeling, you feel alive. (Barrett and Machon www: 3)

The uncertainty and tension generated outside continued also inside. This was supported by the vastness of the warehouse, the detailed installations and the semi-darkness of the interior, which followed the semi-darkness of the streets outside. After the audience was given a mask to put on, they entered an industrial lift that stopped at the top floor of the building, and there was the point where they were left alone to descend to *Faust*'s dark world. They were called to journey through the floors of the building, encountering a labyrinth of spaces that recreated the atmosphere of a 1950s American town. The level of detail in the set design and the lighting combined with the vastness of the warehouse produced a captivating, noir and mysterious atmosphere associated with dark powers, death, eroticism, violence and danger. Interior spaces – motel rooms, bars, a chapel, a large room full of high metal shelves, a picture house – alternated with spaces representing exterior spaces – a forest of fir trees, streets, a field of corn with a scarecrow. The interior of the warehouse had been transformed to 'a strange parallel universe' (Gardner www), as the theatre critic Lyn Gardner says, the intense and immersive atmosphere of which made London seem 'very far away' (Gardner www).

The journey through an unfamiliar world and the discovery of the unknown were core ingredients for the performance experience.[16] The masked audience was

[15] This was unlike, for example, Punchdrunk's *The Masque of the Red Death*, where, despite of the transformation of the BAC and the entrance from a side-door, the audience, at least these who had visited the BAC before, were familiar with the exterior and even for those who had not been at the BAC before there was a sense of safety, since they were aware that they enter a theatre space, even though they did so to attend an unconventional performance.

[16] The National Theatre advised the audience to be aware of the personal risk they were taking by entering the semi-lit interior spaces of the building and by being left alone to explore it: 'patrons are

immersed in the unpredictable performance world, and they were called for a physical engagement with the space. They found themselves facing a new surprise every time they pushed a door to enter the different rooms. By immersing themselves in the maze-like passages which opened in front of them, the audience as a contemporary Theseus, attempted to find the invisible thread that ran through the performance's world. Wandering in the endless channels of the disused warehouse they endeavoured to put the pieces together. They encountered events, characters, objects, spaces of *Faust*'s world, by following a storyline, a character, or chance. Their personal willingness and curiosity were the drive of their movement through the interior of the warehouse. By monitoring their environment, the audience created their own paths through the warehouse. There was no way to perceive the performance all at once and be in control of it; audience, performers, space were all mingled together in a conjoined triad. The entire space was used both by performers and spectators, and as a result the audience felt in the middle of the action.[17]

The performance could be experienced from different perspectives, and the story could be synthesised, dependent on the spectator's point of view. The audience filled in the gaps with their imagination, editing the fragments of the performance world and creating their own version. They were given the chance to choose which route they wanted to follow, for how long they wanted to stay at each scene or space, as well as the proximity they wanted to have with the action and spaces. They moved through rooms, corridors, stairways, they encountered installations representing confined or outdoor spaces. They linked these spaces up or they stayed puzzled by them. The fact that audience members were left alone in big rooms or small interior spaces, where personal objects were laid down, may have created contradictory feelings of enthusiasm and embarrassment.

The performance was repeated twice each evening in 90-minute loops without a break for the performers. Members of the audience whose ticket was for the first cycle of the performance had a second chance to experience the scenes, possibly following another route in their journey. Of course, only if they had the stamina to start again. The duration, as well as the rotation, of the play, in addition to the absence of applause at the end gave the impression of continuation of *Faust*'s world beyond

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advised that the performance is very dark in places and requires active engagement in travelling across five floors' (NT programme Jan. – Apr. 2007).

[17] As a theatre critic observes: '[y]ou'll find yourself not just watching the action […] but physically inside it' (Watson www).

the performance, which contributed to the functionality that was built through the detailed design of the warehouse spaces.

2.1.2 *Faust* and site-specificity

In the 20th century, theorists and practitioners challenged established ideas governing the space of the observer and the space of the observed, seeking the empowerment of the audience experience and asking for new possibilities in theatre 'language' and theatrical architecture. This has led theatre performances to move away from the traditional theatre configuration, or even to move away from theatre buildings as a whole. Non-theatre spaces have been employed and offered hospitality to performances by being partially or totally converted. The fact that since the second half of the last century many performances have taken place in non-theatre spaces – such as, warehouses, cafes, streets, train stations, houses – has provoked changes in theatre practice and codes, but also in the way the urban space is considered and experienced. The building that hosts a performance provides a meeting point for audience and performer; it affects the style, rhythm and often the theme of the performance, whilst it also shakes ideas about theatre structures and conventions (stage–auditorium segregation, training methods, performance events' means and missions). However, the impact of using non-theatre spaces extends beyond theatre itself and affects the meaning of the built environment as well as architectural concepts and practices.

Performances, such as *Faust*, that employ non-theatre spaces challenge the relationship between form and function of architectural structures, which is one of the main assumptions in architecture. As the well-known architect Bernard Tschumi says: '[t]he hierarchical cause-and-effect relationship between function and form is one of the great certainties of architectural thinking' (2000: 174). [18] The conversion of spaces or the alteration of their original use provokes the confusion of the terms and breaks the linear association between form and function. As Tschumi observes: 'in today's world where railway stations become museums and churches become nightclubs, a point is being made: the complete interchangeability of form and function' (2000: 173-4). Tschumi, who has argued for the indivisible connection of architecture and event

[18] Tschumi, who amongst other projects has built two large concert halls, claims that theatre spaces, as well as concerts halls, resist change, and he asserts that '[r]egarding the space of performance (theatres, etc), you can easily go back to the history of the last four hundred years where almost everything has been said' (Tschumi et al. 2008: 56).

(Tschumi 1996), opposes notions that tie functionality with form arguing that such concepts 'go against both the real "pleasure" of architecture, in its unexpected combinations of terms, and the reality of contemporary urban life in its most stimulating, unsettling directions' (2000: 174). And he claims that 'the displacement and mutual contamination of terms' (2000: 174) can be used 'to the advantage of a general rejuvenation of architecture' (2000: 174). Performances that use non-theatre spaces generate alternative meanings that contribute both to the discussion about theatre practice as well as architecture.

The performance structure and artistic direction chosen by Punchdrunk and the fact that the *Faust* production took place in a found space has proliferated the attempts made to describe the performance.[19] The puzzlement of defining *Faust*'s performance under a spatial category of theatre practice follows the plethora of overlapping descriptions of a disused building or land. The performance is placed under the broadly-used term 'site-specific'. However, attempts to categorise it to a specific type of performance bring a range of characterisations into view: 'site-specific, promenade installation' (Mountford www); 'one of the most astonishing events' (Clapp www); 'extraordinary theatrical installation' (Marlowe www); 'physical dance theatre on an epic scale' (Watson www). Punchdrunk avoids classifying their work as site-specific, dance theatre, or installation, and they uphold the words 'experience' and 'space': 'Punchdrunk creates deeply immersive narratives in which audiences can experience live performance in extraordinary spaces' (stated in the *Faust* programme).

Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks argue that '[s]ite-specific performances are conceived for, mounted within and conditioned by the particulars of found spaces, existing social situations or locations, both used and disused' (2001: 23). According to them the concept, as well as the reception of a performance are strongly dependent on the site; site-specific performances 'are inseparable from their sites, the only contexts within which they are intelligible' (2001: 23). The meaning of site – shaped by its architecture, its past and present history – intensifies the complexity of performance experience and interpretation. Pearson and Shanks claim that there are 'two basic orders' that contribute to the creation and interpretation of site-specific performances:

[19] Similar examples include: Dreamthinkspeak presented *Underground* (2005) based on Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The performance took place at the basement spaces of the Old Abattoir in Clerkenwell; the audience followed the characters of a story through the underground spaces. An earlier promenade performance, in 1986, *Haunted House Hamlet* was presented by Vancouver's Tamahnous Theatre, and called for the audience to wander the three floors of a building (see Rubess 1986).

'that which is of the site, its fixtures and fittings, and that which is brought to the site, the performance and its scenography: of that which pre-exists the work and that which is of the work' (2001: 23). To what extent do those elements which 'pre-exist the work' – the building and its meanings – and those which are 'brought to the site' – the performance action and scenographical additions – conflict with each other, or collaborate in order to mutually enhance their meanings?

The case of *Faust* calls us to think the degree of interdependence between site and performance, as well as the extent to which what is brought to the site by the performance reveals or hinders the qualities of the existing space. On this point I want to make two observations; first, the 21 Wapping Lane warehouse was stripped of machines and furnishings – anything that could indicate the building's former life – and was also swept of any kind of debris, or material that could indicate desertion and decay. Also, the performance design did not give any evidence of using found or scrap materials from the building's past life. Second, the detailed scenographical work of *Faust*, in addition to the semi-lit spaces did not easily allow the connection of the audience with the building's interior, its texture, colour, traces, or layout. The walls remained at large in darkness, whilst the audience gaze and movement was directed towards and through the elaborate installations. In a way, the scenography transformed the derelict space into sequential theme-designed spaces.[20] The interior transformation of the rooms left pockets of the warehouse exposed, such as stairways and corridors, whilst the presence of the existing site was testified by the dampness of the basement where the last scene took place. However, for most of the building, the scenography and lighting acted as a mask, which, although giving a hint of the shape of the building, did not entirely disclose the building's face.

The labyrinthine interior of the 'prison-like' building of 21 Wapping Lane offered a variety of options for constructing a version of *Faust*. The large scale and the layout of the building required a large cast of volunteer stewards and a backstage team working around the construction of the detailed set design. And at the same time, the size and the 'anonymity'[21] of the building encouraged the construction of the impressive and detailed environments, producing a stimulating adventure for the

[20] For the reason that the interior of the building was transformed to a great degree, representing *Faust*'s world, it can be suggested that the performance was a combination of 'totally transformed' and 'found' space (see Schechner 1968).

[21] By anonymity I mean that its existence was not widely known, and its empty interiors did not give any information to identify its previous use.

audience in its complex interiors. In *Blueprint: The Magazine for Leading Architects and Designers*, David Jays suggests that Punchdrunk marked the theatre design for experimental theatre, and he claims that '[i]n the new century, theatre designers are learning to think of the theatre as a site rather than a stage', they 'respond to environment and architecture as much as performance' (2007: 50). Punchdrunk's large-scale production, Jays claims, 'crystallised the brilliant realisation that the spectator can experience the act of theatre as they do a building: as private or public, anonymous or exposed' (2007: 50).

However, if we consider the degree of attachment of the performance with the building, we could claim that the warehouse functioned mainly as a container in which the performance world laid its theatrical set. What are the elements of the performance, then, that tied the performance to the site? The most influential in this production seemed to be the *form* of the site. That is, the performance responded to the physical qualities of the space and specifically to its dimensions. The case of *Faust* confirms what Fiona Wilkie observes in her critical survey of site-specific performance in Britain: '[i]n many cases, the thematic engagement is deemed less necessary (or, in one or two instances, less desirable) than a geometric or structural one in order for a piece to be termed site-specific' (2002: 155). And for these types of performances, I would propose that the term 'space-specific' may better describe them; in the sense that they are mostly engaged with the materiality of the built space, its layout, its scale, rather than the wider location and its histories.

The geometrical and structural engagement of the performance with the site was well considered and increased the impact of the performance. The audience's journey through the structure of a building, and the exploration of the geometrical qualities and dimensions of the warehouse had been productively used and compounded. The individuality of the site's interior, which was emphasised and significantly contributed to the performance, was its vastness. This supported the freedom of wandering, the unexpected encounters, the choices made by the audience. The size of the warehouse, in addition to the unfamiliarity of the warehouse's interior for the audience, seems to serve what for Barrett is central in his theatre work:

> […] it's simply the size of the space that's important because the audience need to get lost if they want to, they need to be able to lose themselves in the building. And it needs to be big enough to instil that sense of panic, so that at times they can feel out of control; this can't be safe, it can't be legal. (Barrett and Machon www: 3)

The disused warehouse was not the first choice of Punchdrunk. In his interview with Josephine Machon, Felix Barrett states that his initial intention was to employ a hospital space for the *Faust* performance, and he mentions that 'a psychiatric ward in Goodge Street […] would have been absolutely fantastic' (Barrett and Machon www: 3). Whilst he observes that the fact of not obtaining the space that originally he hoped to work in is not the exception but the rule, he says: '[w]e've never done a show in the space that I first wanted' (Barrett and Machon www: 3). It can be suggested that any building that could accommodate *Faust*'s scenographical installations could have been possibly employed for the performance. Certainly, the fact that the building was abandoned rescued the production from a series of practical issues, which would otherwise have had to be confronted if the building was in use. In this case there are two main issues that would have had a great impact on the audience experience and would have altered the effects of the performance outcome. One is the encounter with the exterior of the building which, in the case of the 21 Wapping Lane warehouse, the particularity of its exterior signified its derelict state and its lack of accessibility; and the other is that a different layout would have altered the audience's movement through it. Certainly, the vastness of the building, in addition to the fact that any previous experience of the neglected warehouse interior was unlikely for most of the audience, contributed to the audience's disorientation and thrust them into surrendering to the rules of the 'game'. The derelict site of 21 Wapping Lane and its overwhelming size amplified the idea that the audience went for a journey of discovery.

2.2 The city's ruins perform

The fact that the performance of *Faust* was presented in an abandoned, and apparently useless building, instead of a theatre space, challenges not only established ideas about theatre form, but also ideas about derelict spaces. The theatrical approach of the Punchdrunk production suggested an imaginative spatial practice of a neglected space, which often is characterised as 'suitable for nothing' or 'wasteland'. What the case of *Faust* shows is the significance of re-considering the function of derelict space within the cityscape. The use of the industrial ruin of 21 Wapping Lane for *Faust* questions meanings and definitions ascribed to neglected spaces, whilst it shows alternative ways of interacting and thinking about derelict sites and their future.

Neglected spaces – called urban voids, left-over spaces, gaps, dead zones, edge spaces, free-spaces, wastelands, vacant land, brownfields – puzzle city planners, governmental bodies, architects and inhabitants (see UTF 1999, Kivell 1999, and Doron 2000). They appear in the margins but also in the centres of the city, and they are typically considered useless, since their meaning and potential is often overlooked. Usually, if an official use is not given through conversion, they are demolished. However, as Lebbeus Woods explains, the production of derelict spaces is inevitable:

> Every city […] will inevitably produce some left-over or abandoned places, spaces which were once useful and now are not. They wait in darkness and silence, "free" of content, poised for some re-occupation, some re-definition in human terms, or for the wrecking-ball that will abruptly end their latency and potential. (2000: 201)

The use of derelict spaces, such as the Wapping warehouse, which goes beyond the initially designed function, not only challenges concepts about the meaning of contemporary ruins, but also the role of planners and architects. Alternative uses of neglected spaces contest those endowed with expertise in constructing the built environment, and exemplify what Lefebvre claims: '[s]urely it is the supreme illusion to defer to architects, urbanists, or planners as being experts or ultimate authorities in matters relating to space' (1991: 95). The function of the Wapping warehouse as a performance space certainly surpasses the purpose that the warehouse was built for. It could have been hardly imagined by the architects or builders that the brick and concrete structure, which aimed to facilitate the docks network, would host an audience of a theatre performance. The inventive use of ruined spaces proves what Gil Doron notes: 'the design of a certain place or a building does not stop after the architect has signed the plan, nor after it has been built, and not even when it has stopped functioning according to the original plan' (2000: 259).

Performances outside established theatre spaces like *Faust* alter preconceptions about the function of urban spaces, at the same time as they change audience's engagement with performance codes. In cases where performances employ a derelict space for their purposes, they call us to think the meaning a neglected space has within the cityscape, and how, through practice, ruins can re-contextualise the process of planning and using city-spaces. In the following discussion I examine concepts and practices related to derelict spaces, in order to demonstrate how these question the ways the grid of the city is organised, and how they offer other ways of experiencing the built environment.

2.2.1 Naming a site as derelict

Industrial ruins are the product of the abandonment of sites that supported industries and manufacturing business. Due to economic decline in industrial areas in Europe and North America during the 1920s and 1930s, derelict land started to emerge. According to Philip Kivell, neglected land did not come to the centre of city planners and geographers' attention until after the Second World War, whilst in the 1980s concerns about derelict land became extensive. The abandonment of industrial sites was the result of change of the means of production, in the light of new technologies and the turn of interest of economic investment. Often the abandonment of industrial sites was accompanied by the desertion of big areas and supporting infrastructures that had been constructed in support of their function.

Since the land use was changing orientation, the rhythm of the vacation of sites that did no longer participate in the production chain was rapid and difficult to deal with. Kivell observes that 'the use of, and demand for, land was changing profoundly, and as a consequence derelict, vacant and otherwise waste land was being created in many localities faster than it could be dealt with' (1999: 310). Therefore, despite attempts to redevelop sites of dereliction, the total amount of derelict land in Britain appeared to remain in the same proportion, since, as Kivell notes, 'new dereliction' happens 'when business collapse or activities are abandoned' (1999: 313). In many cases, because the inner areas of cities were not able to attract investment, the problem of the 'inner city' emerged. The abandonment of individual sites and even whole areas in the centre of big cities 'was identified as one of the most severe social and planning issues of the era' (1999: 310) especially in Britain, as Kivell notes.

The estimation of derelict land in Britain has been inadequate. According to Kivell, in England reported contaminated land varied from 27,000 to 50,000 hectares in 1990; whilst vacant land was estimated at 49,080 hectares; however, assertions suggested that 60,000 hectares characterised as vacant existed only in urban districts (1999: 312). In 1999, diverse data which concerns the quantity of existing derelict land in England were presented in the Urban Task Force (UTF)'s report, *Towards an Urban Renaissance*.[22] The mission of the UTF, led by the renowned architect Richard

[22] In 1999, the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, argued that abandoned and declined urban areas, especially these of the inner cities, lessened people's confidence and deteriorated the environment. In April 1998, he initiated the work of the UTF that aimed to achieve 'an urban renaissance' based on

Rogers (Lord Rogers of Riverside), was to examine the reasons that led urban areas to decline in England and to indicate practical suggestions on how derelict areas of cities could be revived.[23] The UTF drew on different database sources in order to develop the discussion about brownfields that could potentially be developed for residential use. The different data sources used were the Land Use Change Statistics (LUCS), the Derelict Land Survey (DLS), the Vacant Land Survey and National Land Use Database (NLUD) (see UTF 1999: 173-89). The different agencies presented different statistics; thus, for example, the NLUD estimation for derelict land in England was 17,300 hectares, whilst the DLS evaluation was 39,600 hectares (UTF 1999: 180).[24] However, the UTF developed their discussion about the previously developed land available for new constructions and presented their recommendations for changing the urban environment, despite the inconsistencies that appeared in the results of the different agencies.

An important factor in the difficulty of achieving an agreement on the proportion of the derelict land is the limitation and ambiguity of the terms used in order to characterise neglected spaces as derelict, vacant or contaminated. In other words, what is considered to be waste and what is not. In the UTF report, derelict land is specified as '[l]and so damaged by industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment' (UTF 1999: 178). Whilst the definition of vacant land refers to '[l]and that was previously developed and is now vacant which could be developed without treatment' (UTF 1999: 178). And vacant buildings indicated as '[u]noccupied buildings that are structurally sound and in a reasonable state of repair' (UTF 1999: 178). The definition of contaminated land, according to Kivell, includes 'land that appears to a local authority to be in such a condition –

'social inclusion, sustainable development, urban design, and urban regeneration' (UTF 1999: 3). Among the factors that the UTF had to examine was the need to increase the proportion of brownfields used for redevelopment; their intention was to promote ways of recycling previously developed land (brownfields) and to prioritise their use over the development of greenfield land. The government's target for residential construction on previously developed land was set at 60% (UTF 1999: 3), whereas according to LUCS, in 1996 the proportion of the brownfields that were developed for residential use in England was 47% (UTF 1999: 174). The UTF report was also taken into consideration in order for the government to organize their Urban Policy White Paper.

[23] Loretta Lees argues that terms used by government urban policy statements, such as 'urban renaissance' used by the UTF report, are usually connected with gentrification practices. She says: '[t]he metaphor of urban sustainability, like that of urban renaissance, is often used to promote solutions to English urban problems that could be conceived of as state-led gentrification' (Lees 2003: 67).

[24] The UTF considers as a basis for their assessments and proposals the average of 29,000 hectares of derelict land.

because of substances it contains – that water pollution or significant harm is being, or is likely to be, caused' (1999: 310).

These attempts to categorise land to certain types leave room for interpretation, and for this reason the data sources do not present reliability and their estimations are uncertain. Land or buildings can be under-reported, or over-estimated, depending on how each survey considers them. Leftovers from previous spatial uses, such as industrial ruins, docks, disused harbours, neglected train stations, ex-military camps, deserted mining areas – can be easily moved under any of the terms that characterise abandoned sites. However, according to Kivell, the different types of land either called derelict, or vacant or contaminated share some very important characteristics; they constitute '[a] waste of a valuable resource', as they are not in use; '[a]n eyesore', as they are 'invariably ugly'; '[a] disincentive to development', since they prevent new investment in the area; and '[a] danger', because their bad condition conceals traps and toxins (1999: 310).

Furthermore, the categorisation, as well as the future plans for derelict land, become problematic because of the methodologies that are used. As Doron indicates, in many cases the evaluation of these sites is based on viewing 'these places from a distance: maps, photography, aerial photography and maybe the view from a passing car' (2000: 249). The consequences of this practice certainly extend beyond the production of statistics and affect the way that space is considered by urban planners and governmental systems. And, thus, it determines to a large extent the decisions for further plans. It also contributes to the objectification of space and the notion of space being an abstract product, rather than a product of social practice. Doron reports an alternative method adopted by the Civic Trust in order to investigate wastelands, in which people were asked to testify their opinions about neglected sites close to where they live. The survey revealed that 'the wasteland was actually not a waste at all' (2000: 249). These sites, although deemed to be ugly and dirty, were also considered to be an asset (by 59% of the people questioned) and they were in some kind of use (40% of people asserted so, whilst 51% considered these sites as 'havens' for wildlife) (2000: 249).

In 1999, Doron visited areas characterised as 'dead zones' in 20 cities around Europe, America and Asia. Although the areas were considered to be 'dead zones' on

the planners' maps,[25] Doron's visit showed that areas called 'dead zone' was far from being 'dead'. His research proved that despite the assertions of uselessness of vacant spaces, most of these sites presented some form of use; either this served living purposes or hosted a range of activities. Instead of 'no man's land', areas empty of human presence, he found squatters, punks, anarchists, boat dwellers and artists. And instead of deserted sites he encountered communal gardens, galleries, cultural centres and performance spaces. Doron's research showed that:

> […] underneath the maps and outside the discourse, which have tried and failed to cover the whole territory of the city, worlds exist full of unwritten history, overlooked communities, unseen possibilities, a world with a different order, but also architecture: The Architecture of Transgression. (2000: 252)

Doron argues that, since the Second World War, the practice of typifying derelict sites has provoked puzzlement in architectural practice and planning. He says: 'the discourse and practice of architecture and planning has been perplexed with peculiar spaces in built environment, which have been labelled "wastelands", "derelict areas", "No man's land", "Dead Zones", urban "voids", "Terrain vague"' (2000: 247). The problematic definition of terms that attempt to characterise derelict sites is heightened by the fact that 'there has been little genuine examination of these places' (2000: 247), as Doron observes. Indeed, it is necessary to examine the definitions widely used to label derelict spaces, since this can change prevailing concepts about derelict spaces and also their function and potential use within the city. In many cases, derelict sites fall under the broad category of wastelands because they *look* empty and *appear* deprived of spatial use.

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 'waste' indicates 'not good use' of something (Wehmeier et. al. 2005: 1720), or it is used to characterise materials that are 'no longer needed for a particular process and therefore thrown away' (Wehmeier et. al. 2005: 1720). Because derelict spaces are attached to economic failure and because of their inability to be profitable in the production system, they become waste. As Edensor says: '[i]n a conventional reading of the urban landscape, dereliction and ruin is a sign of waste', an area's dereliction 'signifies a vanished prosperity and […] an uncertain future', thus, 'formerly

[25] For example, the Tel Aviv's planning department had depicted the supposed 'dead zone' of the city with a white mark on the city's map (see Doron: 249-250).

productive spaces become rubbish, are no longer of any use, or have been used up' (2005: 7).

In his book *On Garbage* (2005), John Scanlan attempts to establish a connection between what we value and what is disposed. He examines the metaphorical and material meaning of garbage in a variety of contexts, such as art and intellectual discourse within the Western culture. He points out the connection of waste with 'a notion of "proper use" (of a thing, of time), as it applies, for example, to so-called wastelands' (2005: 22). Wastelands, which appeared to be under 'improper' use, disturb the taxonomy of the city and 'waste' useful space; thus practices that symbolize 'proper use' need to be assigned to them, in order to turn their 'wastefulness' to 'usefulness'. Scanlan notes: 'the meaning of "waste" carries force because of the way in which it symbolizes an idea of improper use, and therefore operates within a more or less moral economy of the right, the good, the proper, their opposites and all the values in between' (2005: 22). Derelict spaces are classified as waste in the current capitalist system which supports the rapid categorisation of products as waste or used up. Waste is associated with consumption or exhaustion because of use; '"to waste" is equally to squander in the distinct sense of not making the best use of something (time, resources, opportunities and so on)' (2005: 22), as Scanlan notes.

In his study *Wasting Away* (1990), Lynch analyses what waste is in terms of things and spaces and how it is produced. He reflects on waste from the perspective of urban planning, incorporating social and anthropological ideas, and he attempts to revert some of the prevalent notions that connect waste to negative views of uselessness and worthless. Lynch identifies the need to think ways of how to waste well, since we need to recognise that decay is part of space, and things in space, in effect of life cycle. For his study he also conducted a range of interviews in order to understand people's view on waste, and he observed that waste is associated with a range of words, such as 'corruption, putrescence, decay, ruin, pollution, defilement, contamination, taint, dirt, garbage, excrement, refuse, dregs, dross, scum, trash, junk, scrap' (1990: 146). Lynch notices that '[m]eanings overlap and shift over time' and, in

fact, '[o]ver the years, the meanings tend to become more general and more negative' (1990: 146).[26]

Lynch explains that '[a]bandonment makes waste' (1990: 149),[27] however, he clarifies that 'a desert, or even an empty building or an unused machine, may only apparently be wasteful' (1990: 147) and he claims that '[t]he labelling of something as waste must always ask: waste for whom?' (1990: 148). In the same lines he specifies that the definition of dereliction is commonly associated profit; he says: '[i]f it [land] pays, it isn't derelict. If it doesn't pay, due to some human devilment, and once did pay, then it is derelict' (1990: 98). Lynch prompts us to reconsider what and why we characterise something as waste; and his view implies that there is not such a thing as waste, since everything can be reused, or re-enter the value process, depending on how we look at it.

2.3 The Performance site: 21 Wapping Lane, London E1

The 21 Wapping Lane site is situated in the Wapping area that geographically and administratively belongs to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, which is part of London's Docklands district. Wapping finds itself between the City (1.5km to the west) and Canary Wharf (2.5km to the east), the two big financial and trade centres of global importance in London. The area seems to be squashed by the height of the dense built environments of the City of London and Canary Wharf that ceaselessly rise. As early as in 1961, Lewis Mumford asserted that the 'building boom' in post-war London which gave the opportunity for high-rise buildings that had started implanted in London, put the city's balance in danger. He declared: '[t]he present edification and elevation of London's new business bureaucracy in a multitude of new skyscrapers are enough in themselves to upset the precarious inner balance that London, despite its continued expansion, achieved within the last half century' (1964: 118).[28]

[26] Thus, for example, the word 'junk' which 'once meant old but reusable iron, glass, and paper' has more recently been used as a term to characterize 'any useless, broken-up, non-functioning thing' (1990: 146).

[27] He distinguishes between the two terms abandonment and decline: '[a]bandonment differs from decline, which is a gradual diminution of value or vitality. Decline may lead to abandonment, but need not, nor must abandonment be preceeded [sic] by decline. Abandonment can be painful when it is involuntary. In other cases, it may be a liberation' (1990: 149-150).

[28] Mumford, who expressed his admiration of London, observed that London tended to be the place where architects and urban planners repeated the mistakes of the New York's urban planners during the earlier twenty years. He noted that the principles that had led the architectural design of the large-scale constructions in New York reoccurred in London; architects were more concerned about the use of new

Wapping is one of the areas in the Docklands that has escaped, until now, the implantation of large-scale structures. It consists of docks and warehouses mostly converted into apartments that have become fashionable riverside spots for the middle-class professionals working nearby.[29] However, it is significant to note that, as we will see in a following section of this chapter, the redevelopment plans for the 21 Wapping Lane site comply with the extended practice followed in Docklands in the last few decades. This means that the demolition of the old warehouse has opened the way for the realisation of the new plans, which will provide the area with a high-density construction that supports a large proportion of luxury apartments. Whilst, the height and the distinctive design of the new construction will seek to establish itself among the glass-cladded city's landmarks that compete in London's skyline.

Wapping Lane connects The Highway (A1203) in the north to Wapping High Street in the south. Two tube stations close to the site ensure its connection with business centres such as Bank and Canary Wharf. The Shadwell Underground and Docklands Light Railway station is approximately 10 minutes walk to the north, and the Wapping Underground station[30] is 5 minutes walk to the south. To the north boundary of the 21 Wapping Lane site, the canal and a public footpath connect the Eastern Dock with the Western Dock. A ten-storey car park (rising to 32m) stands to the north side of the canal, whilst on the other side of Wapping Lane, and next to the canal, the Grade I listed building Tobacco Dock is located. In front of Tobacco Dock, which remains vacant after its unsuccessful conversion to a shopping centre in the early 1990s, two abandoned ships have been anchored, named 'The Three Sisters' and 'The Sea Lark'. To the south of the 21 Wapping Lane site there are mainly 3 to 4-storey residential developments – largely constructed of local yellow brick – whilst right next to the southern boundary of the site the Grade II* listed building Raines

materials and impressive forms rather than the context that these structures belonged to. With the restrictions on buildings heights lifted, a series of skyscrapers grew in the heart of London, and Mumford warned that this would provoke larger problems than these happened in New York; he characteristically says: 'since London has a far greater core of fine buildings and historic areas that both recall the past and aesthetically grace the present, the effect threatens to be even more devastating than, say, the ruin of Park Avenue' (1964: 118), and he notified: '[b]efore Londoners wake up to what has been happening, a great deal of damage will have been done' (1964: 124).

[29] As Andy Coupland says: '[i]t rapidly became fashionable to sport a luxury *pied-a-terre* in a converted Wapping warehouse' (1992: 160)

[30] The Wapping Underground station uses the Brunel Thames Tunnel that connects Wapping and Rotherhithe. The Brunel Thames Tunnel was the world's first underwater tunnel constructed for public use. It was designed by Sir Marc Sambard Brunel and his son Isambard Kingdom Brunel; the construction of the tunnel started in 1825 and finished in 1843. Although the tunnel was meant to be used for carriage traffic, it was used only by pedestrians until 1865, when the East London Railway acquired it and trains started run along it (Carr 1984: 53).

House is raised up to 2 storeys. Further to the south and west there are blocks of flats, which include a large number of converted warehouses. The open parkland, Wapping Woods, exists adjacent to the east of the site.

The 21 Wapping Lane warehouse was made of concrete and brick with high-level windows with a total floorspace of 9,764 sq.m.[31] The site in which the building was situated covers an area of 0.8 hectares and included an asphalt backyard. There are two entrances to the site: the main one located in the northwest corner of the site from Wapping Lane – which was also the entrance of the performance – and a secondary vehicular entrance to the south in Raine Street. In 1894, on the map *London and Its Environs* (Ordnance Survey Office 1894-96), the site appears as 'No. 10 Warehouse'; and it was initially used as a general storage, mainly for sugar and coffee, as is depicted on the *Insurance Plan of London* (Goad 1886-99). Following the docks' closure, the warehouse was shut down around 1968 and remained largely abandoned. It had also been used as an archive repository, and Group Four Security partially used the site as a storage, distribution and office, and this was its latest use, before the Punchdrunk production. The site is surrounded by a wall of 4 to 6 metres height at the western and southern boundaries. The wall has been built from yellow brick and has two types of construction; it is likely to have been built between 1848 and 1873.[32] A high wall obscures the view inside site and its demolition constituted an issue in the discussion about the redevelopment plans of the site.[33] Part of the wall has finally been decided to be rescued from demolition and to be incorporated in the new plans (fig. 2.3).

The 21 Wapping Lane warehouse was one of the last remaining sites that stayed vacant after the gradual closure of docks around the River Thames. The shutdown of the docks, which was completed by the end of the 1960s, produced a range of buildings and sites that remained mostly underused or vacant until their redevelopment that largely started in the late 1980s. Because of the proximity of these sites to the heart of the financial centre of London, the City of London, they were seen as an ideal opportunity for new constructions and conversions. Therefore, their redevelopment served the expansion of the financial business zone and offered the chance for the production of luxury residential areas. In order to read the 21 Wapping

[31] According to the planning report PDU/1040a/01 (GLA (April 2007) www); paragraph 10.
[32] According to 'Redevelopment of 21 Wapping Lane; Environmental Statement: Vol. 3; Non-Technical Summary' (Eulysses Limited (September 2007) www); paragraph 8.3.
[33] See PDU/1040a/01 (GLA (April 2007) www); paragraph 44 and 45.

Lane warehouse within its urban context, the transformation of Docklands, and understand the impact of the new construction on Wapping, I present a brief discussion about the transformation of Docklands in the following section.

2.3.1 Docklands: a brief reconstruction history

The docks were mainly built in the marshy ground of the north riverside of the Thames in the early nineteenth century and developed through to the 1930s at the outskirts of the City of London.[34] By the end of the 1960s, because of the use of larger ships that could not be accommodated in the Docklands' sites, and because the economy had started shifting orientation the docks started closing down with first St Katharine Docks[35] in 1969 and lastly the Royal Group of docks in 1981. The deserted Docklands, as Theo Barker notes, left '[a] prime site of eight square miles – or, rather, a multitude of prime sites – close to the heart of London', which 'became available for the enterprising who had the vision and imagination to adapt the area for the needs of the twenty-first century as the dock builders had prepared to meet the requirements of the nineteenth and twentieth' (1986: 13). Under the name 'Docklands' are found united areas such as Wapping, the Isle of Dogs, Limehouse, and also areas further to the east, such as the Royal Docks of Newham; this, as John Eade supports, was part of the attempt to present '[a] certain symbolic unity' to an area characterised by 'a highly disparate range of localities' and formed 'part of the strategy of attracting outside investment and presenting a rival magnet to the City of London' (1997: 131).

The attraction of new investment was encouraged by the Docklands' strategic location. The derelict buildings and the disused industrial sites emerged after the closure of docks were part of the inner city of London, and as Massey points out: '[i]nner cities are more attractive partly because of their centrality and accessibility, partly because of their locational status. And so there is potential for them once again to become symbolic places of prestige, important arenas for profitable investment' (1991: 6). Thus, the process of reimagining the Docklands area targeted further investments and signified the passage from an industrial period to a 'new service' economy: banking, retail, leisure, resulting to a dramatic architectural change of the area.

[34] For Docklands' history see Fishman et al. 1990; Rule 2009; Brown 1978; and Al Naib and Carr 1986.
[35] St Katharine Docks was '[a] prime site opposite the Tower of London', as Coupland notes, that 'held obvious development potential' (1992: 151); thus, since it was sold to developer Taylor Woodrow, it was converted into a site that supports luxury properties and amenities.

The transformation of the Docklands provoked conflicting views, objections and a series of discussions. The policies of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) – which was formed in 1980 in order to enable the redevelopment of the disused docks – were questioned for they provoked the displacement of local people and small-scale business from the area, in order for the district to be occupied by new business centres and residents, most of whom were qualified professionals working in the financial sector. However, in her article 'Places and Their Pasts', in which she challenges concepts that construct the identity of a place and its history,[36] Massey notes that Docklands' history of spatial changes and social conflicts goes further back to the past from the moment that docks were rendered derelict and the area transformation caused the displacement of locals:

> The claims made by some for the essentially working-class nature of London's docklands depend not only upon a particular reading of that area's past but also on a particular demarcation of it: a longer period of history, for example, would have taken in other dramatic changes, not least that when the docks were first constructed and an area of agricultural land and settlements was built over in the physical manifestation of a new articulation of social relations – when a community of dockers was created. (1995: 188)

Indeed, even within the history of construction and expansion of London's docks through the 19th century to the 1930s – as bigger ships and more cargoes anchored – required the demolition of a large number of houses; as Coupland reports only for St Katharine Docks 1,250 houses were demolished, leaving 11,000 people homeless (1992: 150). The policies of the governmental agency LDDC in the 1980s did not prevent the sharp polarisation of the area between the new residents and the locals that had placed Docklands 'at the eye of storm' (Massey 1991: 7). The phenomenon of the gentrification of the inner city, often emerging in ex-industrial cities since the 1980s, became apparent in the area of Docklands (Hall 1998: 100). According to Neil Smith and Peter Williams, the term 'gentrification' indicates 'the rehabilitation of working-class and derelict housing and the consequent transformation of an area into a middle-class neighborhood' (1986: 1). Thus, middle-class residents

[36] Massey argues that what is considered to form the 'local uniqueness' of a place is 'always already a product of wider contacts; the local is always already a product in part of "global" forces' (1995: 183). She links what is considered local with a wider geographical picture and she uses the case of London's Docklands, in order to contest ideas that in a way romanticized the past, since '"the past" is seen in some sense to embody the real character of the place' (1995: 183) as she says. For Massey, '[t]hese kinds of (implicitly or explicitly) internalist and essentialist constructions of the character of places […] not only fail to recognise the long history of interconnectedness with elsewhere (the history of the global construction of the local), they also presuppose a particular relationship between the assumed identity of a place and its history. (1995: 183).

occupied the run-down area of Docklands, changing the social map and the economic orientation.[37]

The design and construction processes followed in Docklands provoked a physical change of the area that did not grow harmoniously with local people's needs and through what already existed in the area. According to Andy Coupland, the purpose of the LDDC was mainly 'to facilitate the private sector's activity in the area' (1992: 152), whilst the communication of the LDDC with a wider audience and local communities was insufficient. Therefore, 'regeneration' plans did not include the locals' view, since this made easier the speculation of land development. As Coupland puts it:

> In general, relationships between councils and the LDDC have been very poor. The LDDC's attitude to the local community has consistently been to ignore them if it seems likely that their view might in any way block progress of significant development – however valid the community concern might be. As a marketing agency the LDDC is selling development land, and would therefore prefer to present the image of 'wide open spaces' rather than an area with over 40,000 inhabitants, with their own views on how development should proceed. (1992: 154)

The LDDC, acting as a marketing agency, orientated its efforts in selling derelict land to private investor companies, so to overcome the trouble of vacant land in the inner city.[38] Thus, it was primarily the property developers appointed by the investor companies who by adopting a market-led approach and not following a methodical city planning scheme directed the forms of structures imposed on Docklands. As Coupland says: '[p]lanning had a very limited role to play; the market was to determine what should be built and where it should be built'(1992: 149). It is worth noting the early LDDC policy as concerns the non-existence of a planning scheme, which is manifested in the following statements of the LDDC's Chief Executive, Reg Ward, who states in 1981: 'I don't believe in the planning system. I'm opposed to land-use planning, quality does not flow from it' (cited in Coupland: 152). And one year later he said, 'we are making a virtue of having no grand strategy' (cited in Coupland: 152). Nigel Broackes's words, the first Chairman of the LDDC, were

[37] The gentrification of the area provoked an increase in unemployment of the local residents as new highly paid jobs that required specialised professionals emerged – making redundant manufacturing industries – and house prices increased so they were no more affordable to the local communities.

[38] In the 1980s, both Britain and USA followed the same tactic for the developments of their urban centres: '[t]he private sector was targeted in both countries as a main agent in the alleviation of urban problems' (Hall 1998: 58).

along the same lines: 'I do not intend that we should have a rigid plan to which developers must conform' (cited in Coupland: 153).

The lack of an urban planning system, which is able to 'conceive of the development of the city in its totality, and to situate developments within the wider urban context' (Hall 1998: 89), led to an architectural competition of diversity and multiplication of styles of the built constructions, whose 'scale and staggering architectural style […] have demonstrated the power of the large developer in reshaping or reorienting the landscapes of certain cities' (Hall 1998: 87). Because developers did not comply to any planning scheme and were mainly interested in how their impressive mega-structures would be profitable, urban landscapes became fragmented,[39] having no link with the wider picture of the city, confirming what Tim Hall observes:

> Developers who became increasingly influential agents of change in British cities during the 1980s […] have no need to look beyond the boundaries of their own development projects. They are primarily concerned only with the planning of their own 'fragments'. (1998: 89)

Architecture played a central role in the reconstruction of the image of Docklands, since it acted as a strategy of advertisement and promotion of the new image of Docklands. As Hall says: '[i]n the post-industrial economy, image is a vital component of economic regeneration' (1998: 93). The highly distinctive structures and their large scale became a symbol of the enormous redevelopment in Docklands and the grandiose skyscrapers, which have obtained a distinct place in London's skyline, act as a flagship to signify Docklands' regeneration. Their location next to the waterscapes of London's River Thames, which have been appropriately reshaped, enhanced their picturesque effect. The fact that, on the one hand, these buildings are among tens of conservation areas and hundreds of listed buildings, and on the other hand, that their view is mixed with historical buildings such as St. Paul's Cathedral and the Tower of London increases their impact and value.

[39] One of the most distinctive examples of this fragmentation happened in Canary Wharf. Canary Wharf is located in the West India Docks on the Isle of Dogs (1.5 miles to the east of Wapping). In 1988, Olympia & York (O&Y) international property development company (based in Toronto, and which owns office spaces in the US and Canada) undertook the reconstruction of the new business district in Canary Wharf (see Crilley 1993). The Isle of Dogs was characterised as an Enterprise Zone, and this gave autonomy – 'relaxed planning restrictions and reduced government interference' (Hall 1998: 61) – to the O&Y firm to go ahead with their plans for the redevelopment of the site. One Canada Square, an 800 ft obelisk skyscraper and the tallest building in the UK when it was erected in 1991, meant to be the beginning of a wave of skyscrapers constructions. 8 Canada Square (also known as HSBC tower) and 25 Canada Square (which belong to Citigroup Centre building complex) were completed by 2001.

Alongside the dramatic architectural forms, another parameter that contributes to the advertisement of the new image and increases the impact of the reconstruction is the employment of a famous architect. As Hall suggests: 'the employment of a publicly known "superstar" architect whose presence on a project will attract a great deal of media attention […] Architecture, together with the architects responsible, has increasingly become a form of corporate advertising' (1998: 88). A number of well-known architects have been included in the large reconstructions in areas that have undergone dramatic transformations.[40] And as Darrel Crilley claims: '[b]uildings designed by culturally consecrated architects also function as "symbolic capital", signifying the cultural nobility and taste of the patron' (1993: 234). Thus, well-known architects have participated in the change of image of Docklands promoting a positive view of the new developments, and confirming the taste of the financially high-status clients.

Additionally, to the reconstruction of the image of Docklands contributed the rhetoric that followed the new constructions. The way that Docklands were introduced in the market was an important factor for the properties to be sold to big financial companies. The estate agents seeking out their new customers 'had to point them in the "right" direction' (1997: 133), as Eade says. The council-run areas had to be excluded from the newcomers' map, while lists of places where it is 'safe' for them to be and mix with 'friendly East Enders' were provided by the agents (Eade 1997: 133). In order for the international middle-class professionals to settle or visit the area, the area was marketed as a '"unique" blend of a maritime heritage and a "state-of-the-art" financial and commercial centre which was leading Britain into the twenty-first century' (Eade 1997: 131). At the same time there was no indication about conflicts happening, or social divisions existing in the area; or, if mentioned at all these were treated as belonging to 'the area's "history"' or 'in the context of crime' (Eade 1997: 132). The Docklands were promoted as a peaceful and safe area with a lifestyle suitable for highly qualified professionals.

The case of Docklands, its lack of planning and the diverse architectural structures form part of a wider discussion about diversity and postmodern city. The number of 'scenographic arrangements' (1993: 247), as Crilley characterises the eye-

[40] Thus, for example, the Canary Wharf construction included the world-known Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, responsible for the design of many distinctive buildings around the world (Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects www).

catching constructions raised in areas such as Docklands, alongside the lack of any wider planning strategy enhance the fragmentation of the area. Crilley suggests that the anticipated diversity is 'engendered by intense inter- and intra-urban competition to offer the most convincing anesthetisation of homogenous office complexes' (1993: 247). According to Crilley this has been the product of the lack of a thoughtful wider vision in the perspective of the postmodern city:

> In the absence of a holistic and forward-looking vision for the postmodern city, its form is characterised by a proliferation of consciously stylised and historicist nodes […] It is a city of self-enclosed architectural tableaux, each designed as relatively autonomous entities with contextual concern only for what is immediately adjacent or directly contribute to value, and each projecting different entertainments and amusements. (1993: 247)

As we have seen in the Introduction, according to Harvey postmodernism advocates the fragmentation of the urban landscape. The 'collage' of structures that superimpose upon each other is characterised by architectural eclecticism since 'postmodernists design rather than plan' (1989: 66). This is achieved with the advocacy of 'the way planners declared themselves enemies of diversity, fearing chaos and complexity because they saw it as disorganised, ugly, and hopelessly irrational' (1989: 75). Although the expression of diversity is a valuable point, the processes that bring diversity into light and the purposes these represent should be examined, and as Harvey puts it in the context of postmodernism: '[o]n the surface, at least, it would seem that postmodernism is precisely about finding ways to express such an aesthetics of diversity. But it is important to consider how it does so' (1989: 75).

Sophie Watson and Katharine Gibson in their chapter 'Postmodern Politics and Planning: A Postscript' analyse what constitutes postmodern planning and political intervention. Postmodern planning contests assumptions of modern planning, as Watson and Gibson say: '[u]nder question are the shibboleths of modernist planning; the notion that cities can be made better, that outcomes are knowable, that order and rationality should and can replace chaos and irrationality; the ideology of progress' (1995: 258). A democratic urban space entails inclusion and diversity; as Watson and Gibson suggest '[a] notion of democratic public spaces and cities implies a notion of planning for diversity and difference' (1995: 257). However, what is considered to support diversity in urban and social terms has often been related to opposition and segregation. 'Diversity and difference intricately linked with polarization and divisions' (1995: 256), since '[d]ifference implies power' (1995: 257), as Watson and

Gibson observe. Then, '[h]ow might we conceive of or build different spaces without reproducing just different patterns of segregation and exclusion?' Watson and Gibson ask, and they continue by questioning the applicability of postmodern planning itself, they say: '[t]his raises the difficult question of whether there can be postmodern planning for postmodern cities' (1995: 257). Planning for difference and inclusion needs thorough thought and necessitates reflection on what we mean by diversity; how diversity is generated, interpreted and realised, since in the name of diversity, postmodern spaces have been created the principles of which do not vary from those notions of order and control that have characterised modern planning.

2.4 The other meaning of derelict sites

The urban space of the contemporary metropolis, such as this of London, is often characterised by well-defined and commodified spaces, which tend to become overly regulated and restrictive. In this case, city-spaces do not often encourage spontaneous actions, inventiveness and diversity. By diversity, I do not mean the variety of architectural structures erected and which usually signify the ambition of architects and property developers, but the range of possibilities that the city and its spaces offer to its inhabitants, so they can imagine, use and participate in producing them. The restriction of possibilities results from the increasing practice of demarcating urban zones and assigning activities to each spatial unit. Despite the fact that the spatial unit may claim diversity through its architectural design, it often follows a tight programme that dictates its use and potential. Then, even when it is claimed that difference is incorporated in urban spaces, this is commodified and manufactured, producing 'spaces of ordered disorder' (Edensor 2005: 171); and in effect, 'the innumerable ambiguities which occur in all social space' (Edensor 2005: 168) are ignored, or remain hidden. Tightly programmed spatial elements and their constant monitoring, which attempts to ensure that function does not deviate from what is planned for and that the flow of the city remains undisturbed, results in restraining freedom, imagination and creativity. In this way there is a strong indication of 'what space is for'. As Tim Edensor puts it: '[t]he channelling and containment of human flows across the city, then, reproduces a sense of what space is *for*' (2005: 56, italics original).

Derelict spaces refuse to follow the norms that govern ordered and regulated urban spaces and the tendency to standardise activities in space-containers. Ruins

stand as a critique to the function of city-spaces as places of consumerism and surveillance. They question the dominant codes of the smooth spaces of the city as well as the lifestyles these promote, as Edensor puts it: '[i]ndustrial ruins stand as material critiques of these processes, rebuke the shiny images through which the city is marketed, the preferred urban lifestyles and activities' (2005: 168). Within the rigid rules that govern well-organised and well-defined city-spaces, ruins act as spaces of counter-practice that offer an alternative way of experiencing and organising city-spaces and city life. They provide possibilities of architecture and spatial practices that open up meanings and encourage multiplicity. Due to the lack of ordinary order and non-compliance with the established norms of architectural practices and aesthetics, ruins call us to re-think the relationship between spatiality and inhabitants. Within the western way of living where an increasing desire to search for the 'new' is occurring, the rapid transformation of objects and buildings into the category of 'waste' should be questioned. A closer look at 'useless' spaces can expand the way we interpret and use the built environment. For a city that seeks imagination in its architectural practice and pursues inclusion and diversity in spatial practices, it is necessary to examine what is placed under the label of 'waste'. It is also important to re-consider the processes, the spatial conventions and conceptions, that expel ruins from the urban fabric.

In his detailed study of derelict spaces, *Industrial Ruins,* Edensor presents the numerous possibilities ruined spaces offer for exploration, bodily engagement, escape, play and imagination. Edensor's analysis is based on his own experience visiting abandoned sites in the UK, for which he does not reveal the exact location, keeping them anonymous. He is not concerned with the act of re-inhabiting the sites, assigning to them a new use, but with the act of visiting them and having a transitory experience of their materials and atmosphere. He aims 'to highlight how the contingent, ineffable, unrepresentable, uncoded, sensual, heterogenous possibilities of contemporary cities are particularly evident in their industrial ruins' (2005: 19). Edensor argues that '[t]he spatial aporias which surround us are neglected at a cost, fuelling monological readings of the city and restricting the diversity of practices and experiences, as well as constraining the ways in which forms of otherness are confronted' (2005: 19). Through the examination of ruined spaces, Edensor seeks 'a dynamic ontology in opposition to an ontology of fixed, immutable forms' (2005: 19). He endeavours to demonstrate how industrial ruins alter the perspective from which the city is looked at and how they suggest 'other ways of using and reading the city' (2005: 171).

Although ruined spaces are mainly seen as 'a sign of waste' (2005: 7), Edensor argues that they contain the 'promise of the unexpected' (2005: 4). Because of this ruins provoke excitement, and in cases discomfort and confusion, and they challenge spatial conventions and our engagement with the built space. Edensor contests the idea of ruins being 'places of uselessness and emptiness' (2005: 168), and he provides vivid narratives of the wildlife and the alternative practices which occur in them – from playing to gardening, and from squatting to film-making – revealing the richness of life in ruined spaces. Given that derelict spaces escape notions of appropriateness, they become sources of experiencing the city otherwise and generate imaginative and creative practices. As Edensor put it: '[t]hey foster imaginative apprehensions of urban space, alternative modes of moving through the city and ways of encountering otherness which involve dialogue, creativity and improvisation' (2005: 169). The accidental blending of materials, objects and levels supports unanticipated encounters, routes and connections, which, of course, entail a degree of risk of potential danger. They host activities and life forms that are forgotten or excluded from the urban environment; they act as spaces of play, adventure, inventiveness, suggesting other ways in which the city can be experienced.[41]

Derelict spaces become exceptionally problematic when they happen to be next to redeveloped city's areas, since their proximity to shiny and new constructed structures, makes immediate and sharp the contrast of the derelict spaces' messy appearance. This comparison makes derelict spaces seem 'out of place'. Although they might once have belonged to the cityscape and have actively participated in the city's life, their present state renders them outside the urban net. Cresswell draws on Mary Douglas's famous characterisation of dirt as 'a matter out of place' (Douglas 1966), in order to exemplify how people and practices are considered 'out of place' when they do not fit within the established function of a system. Therefore, for example, plants which are in the 'wrong place' are characterised as weeds: '[m]any plants become

[41] Neglected spaces offer terrains for physical exploration and imaginative use of materiality; they are ideal places, for example, for skateboarders. The functionless and temporarily or permanently abandoned terrains, such as backyard pools, drained ditches and dams, and large concrete circular pipes – planted in the earth or free-standing – constitute a 'compelling attraction' to skateboarders, because of their 'archaeological character' (Borden 2005: 45). These spaces 'commonly located in the wastelands, deserts and forgotten spaces of the city' (Borden 2005: 45) offer to skateboarders something that certainly skateparks do not offer: the nature of 'primeval material elements' that have been 'forgotten by the inhabitants of the city' (Borden 2005: 45). Skateboarders take pleasure by performing in unwanted places of the city, disregarding values ascribe to built space; for them the ride on the different textures and shapes of the architectural elements is what makes the city exciting.

weeds simply by being in the wrong place' (Cresswell 1997: 335). Similarly, spaces of dereliction because of their 'accidental' location that makes problematic their contextualisation within the city's 'displays' are often considered as being in the 'wrong place' and categorised as wastelands. However, often, it is because of the transformation of the surrounding area that derelict spaces turn to be seen as undesirable and are considered ugly or dangerous; or, these characterisations assigned to derelict spaces are amplified when new plans are promoted for the area. Thus, the inability of ruins to correspond to the ordered arrangement placed upon an urban network and their apparent non-functionality make them be considered 'as blots on the landscape' (Edensor 2005: 166).

Ruined spaces associated with disorder, ugliness and impurity disturb visual order and escape the rhythm of the city; they often signify a failure of the past, whilst their presence raises questions for the future. Within an urban landscape that seeks clarity and functionality, ruined spaces 'are conceived as disturbingly non-functional, they must be replaced and filled in – turned into abstract space – to remove these signs of unproductive and functional blackness' (Edensor 2005: 8). However, in the fact that ruined spaces escape the norms portrayed in urban space exists their potential value and significance; as Edensor puts it:

> […] there is much value that can be reclaimed from industrial ruins. For through their very allegorical presence, ruins can cause us to question the normative ways of organizing the city and urban life, and they contain within them stimuli for imagining things otherwise. (2005: 166)

Abandoned spaces can be seen as 'loose-fit' environments (Thompson 2002: 69). Through their detachment from designers' initial intentions as well as their physical deterioration, they bring ambiguity and looseness to the city-spaces and practices. As Karen Franck and Quentin Stevens note: '[d]ecay over time usually increases looseness' (2007: 25). The existence of 'loose' spaces within the 'tight spaces' (see Sommer 1974) of the contemporary city is not only desirable, but vital. As Franck and Stevens argue such spaces are 'the breathing space of city life' (2007: 3). Since they lie outside the tight-programmed spaces and their fixed meanings, they offer the chance for increasing participation and democratisation of urban spaces.

The alternative practices that appear in derelict sites challenge ideas of ownership, private and public spaces, and suggest new design patterns that emerge from people's needs and through the use of space. Doron in his article 'The Dead Zone

and The Architecture of Transgression' shows how abandoned sites, which are considered to be negative voids, have been employed by communities – often marginalised – whose practices 'transgress spatial constraints and produce different environments' (2000: 252). Doron, who argues for an 'architecture of transgression', suggests that 'architects and planners have a lot to learn from the way these communities create their environments and from contemplating the assets of such environments' (2000: 252). And whilst 'architects and planners are only producing images and imagery of the buildings and built environment, these communities truly produce the space' (2000: 253), Doron argues. Despite the negativity of the terminology used to describe derelict spaces, it is all the more remarkable that some of the 'voids' have also become famous districts or tourist destinations. The abandoned 'empty shells', in many cases, have been transformed into dwellings, performance and creative spaces 'in a way that still has not been fully imagined by architects' (2000: 253), as Doron says.[42]

Thinking about conceptions and practices emerging in derelict spaces that are described as 'dead zones' or 'voids', there is another parameter that should be considered, which is time. The dead zones or voids are not only connected with space, but also with temporality: '[t]hey are in any place and in a non-place. They relate to time' (2000: 256), says Doron. If a dead zone is synonymous with emptiness, then, how should we think about central areas of the city that remain deserted for a large part of the day? These may be offices, shopping centres, squares, private neighbourhoods that present no activity and connection with the rest of the city at certain hours. The most dramatic example of this kind of dead zone appears in the heart of London every night and every weekend. German bankers working in the City and living in London, who were interviewed by Lars Meier, said:

> It is like it is deserted in the evening and during the weekend too. This is a little bit weird, a little bit strange, because one knows about other big cities where there is more action in the evening, but when people go home after work it is deserted city. (2007: 127)
>
> During the week, the finance sector is crowded and during the weekend competently abandoned, therefore you don't see a human being on the street,

[42] Villagio Globale, for example, an ex-abattoir in the centre of Rome, built at the end of the 19th century and abandoned in 1975, has been turned into 'a Mecca for the young and alternative art and music scene in Rome' (2000: 259), as Doron observes, by squatters and the informal activities that have emerged within its spaces and which bestow another meaning on the abandoned building-complex.

> everything is closed, no supermarket and no sandwich shop is open. It is really dead here. (2007: 128).

It is evident that the German financial managers' response is identical with this that describes a dead zone. The otherwise busy City of London, the centre of global financial business, is deserted every evening and during the weekend.[43] The overly defined space of this quarter of London, which does not welcome any other activities apart from the ones assigned during the working hours, renders the area abandoned and detached from city life beyond the working hours.

Also, the imperfect, incomplete presence of derelict spaces not only contrasts with the appearance of the polished and ordered spaces in the urban fabric, but with the imposed rhythm of the city itself. The advanced technological development, which enables immediate communication or fast transportation from one place to another, generates the sense of an unavoidable speeding-up way of living. Derelict spaces seemingly refuse to take part in this increasing velocity. 'The ruin is not particularly penetrated by the speeded-up mobilities and flows' (2005: 125), Edensor claims. The ruins stand still, projecting their slow and silent way of crumbling amongst the repeated movements of the city.

Ruins do not only act as places of resistance to the embedded need for speed, but also point out the 'temporality of the existence […] the inevitability of death and decay, the fragility of life and of the material world' (Edensor 2005: 139). Because of the decline of their physical appearance, ruins contest ideas that assert the durability of the built environment. They become 'timely reminders that buildings never last for ever, highlighting the fluidity of the material world' (Edensor 2005: 165). Their presence is a testimony to the unavoidable decay of materiality, questioning expectations deriving from new architectural achievements and distinctively designed buildings – which in many cases are erected replacing them. Doron describes derelict spaces as 'open museums of the evils of the 20th century' (2000: 251); these 'open museums' are able to trigger memories in a direct way, which is juxtaposed to formal attempts at remembering the past of the city. Their three-dimensionality, or even better, their four-dimensionality – since time is also imprinted on their decomposing

[43] However, recent efforts for activating the area during the evenings and weekends can be noticed, such as is the construction of the new big shopping centre near to St Paul's cathedral (see BBC News (28 October 2010) www). It opened in 2010 and it aspired to transform the area: '[t]he developers and the City of London hope that One New Change will help transform the City from a nine-to-five weekday centre to a seven-day social destination' (Kollewe www).

materials – provides vivid evidence about the past, before they disappear or become a two-dimensional figure or picture in a book or map. They call us to re-consider the values on which we think about our past and plan our future.

2.4.1 The future of ruins

Revisiting our conceptions about the meaning of ruined spaces as well as the practices they might advocate is necessary, for this can alter the place of ruined spaces in urban space and the processes that shape their future. The tactic of re-planning and redevelopment 'will not delete the systems that produced these "voids" and waste' as Doron argues, since '[t]hese strategies and their methods are part of the same economic, social, political and planning systems that created these places from the beginning' (2000: 252). Derelict spaces are considered as a major problem, they are a 'scar' in the city, which disrupts urban order and function, and seems difficult to tackle. Often, the ruined sites are the focus of debates concerning their future use. And usually demolition is suggested as an indicative solution, because it appears to be cheaper and easier than the transformation of the existing site. Their redevelopment is usually orientated to maximise the profit from the exploitation of the site.

Demolition, according to Lynch, 'is usually an afterthought, a minor event between site acquisition and new construction' (1990: 85). However, it is a 'dangerous and highly skilled' work (1990: 84). It 'uses special techniques and machines: wrecking balls, pusher arms, explosives, bursters, thermic lances', though, '[t]he most delicate work is still done by the skilled "topmen," who are standing on or next to what they are taking down, and thus in constant risk of falls, collapses, fumes, dust, nails, and bad footing' (1990: 84). Lynch explains that because of the new hard and durable materials used in constructions, and because of more complicated forms appearing in architecture, the difficulty of demolition increases and in many cases includes unpleasant surprises. Thus, he suggests that building designers should also 'consider the eventual break-up of their fabric, and file specifications for its dissolution as well as its creation' (1990: 86).

Considering and planning the reverse of the building's construction will affect the creation of the building itself, as Lynch suggests: 'thinking through a demolition sequence will also inform building design in an interesting way' (1990: 174). Lynch urges people to think about how built structures can be reused, since over time all the built structures will cease their planned function. He says: '[w]e might speculate about

the reuse of typical contemporary elements, since in time all are sure to be abandoned' (1990: 174).[44] Urban planners and architects should acknowledge that parts of the city grow, reach their potential and decline; they change through time and use. And this should be taken into the account and incorporated in the process of developing and designing new built spaces.

The location of a derelict site is crucial since it determines whether is going to be redeveloped or not, and what kind of suggestions for redevelopment will be presented. If derelict sites are considered to be 'in the wrong place for modern investment and fail to convey the correct prestige and place image' (Kivell: 311), then they do not attract the attention of planners. In many cases, existing plans may not go ahead in realisation 'until a time coincident with economic upturn when their redevelopment might be more advantageous' (Edensor 2005: 8). This gap in time between the present status and the future plans is what, according to Doron, creates the 'dead zones': '[t]he "Dead Zones" […] are not created by an act of destruction, but by suspension of new plans for an area that is underused or has been abandoned by its formal activities' (2000: 260).

The suspension of the plans for the demolition of the 21 Wapping Lane warehouse, which was situated in the key development location of Wapping, had given the chance for Punchdrunk to present their performance. Before the realisation of redevelopment plans, which include the demolition of the existing warehouse and the erection of five multi-storey blocks for residential-led mixed use, the audience had the chance to enter the site and experience the materiality of space, together with the performance world. If the site was accessible to people, then there may be different suggestions for redevelopment plans. Practices and uses that could have emerged in and around the warehouse may have dictated another way of transforming and using its spaces.

2.4.2 Redevelopment plans for 21 Wapping Lane

The regeneration of the Wapping area begun at the end of the 20th century could not omit the large and strategically located 21 Wapping Lane site (fig. 2.4). In

[44] Lynch makes a valid point on the degree of adaptability of the hard structures of the city: '[h]ouses, lofts and sheds, small apartments and small office buildings, if well built, have always found alternative uses when their time approached. But we have more stubborn possessions on our hands, like the massive city walls or eroded landscapes of history. Today one thinks of parking garages, freeways, the vast pavements of airports, subways, skyscrapers, or missile silos. What will we do with them?' (1990: 175).

2004, redevelopment plans were submitted to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council by Eulysses Limited and PDP Architects (Paul Davis and Partners), concerning the 21 Wapping Lane site. In February 2005, the Mayor of London, taking into consideration the planning report PDU/1040/01 of Greater London Authority (GLA), decided that although the proposed high-density development was principally consistent with London planning polices, the overall development could not be approved (Dolphin 2005 www). This was due to a number of strategic planning issues that were considered unacceptable. These included the inadequate level of affordable housing provision, the insufficient consideration of recreating the adjacent open space and the canal, the development's unsatisfactory provision for cycle spaces and wheelchair accessibility, and also the lack of consideration concerning energy consumption and sustainability.[45] In April 2007, a revised application was examined by GLA and the Mayor of London. Although the development was in principle supported, the planning permission was once more refused, for a number of issues had still to be resolved (Dolphin 2007 www). These included the small percentage of affordable housing; the development's poor quality concerning the arrangement of the site layout, the orientation and variety of dwellings; and the insufficient approach to energy issues that did not support sustainability.[46] In March 2008, the revised plans for 21 Wapping Lane proposed by Eulysses Limited and PDP Architects were finally approved by the Mayor of London, after consulting the planning report PDU/1040a/02 of GLA (Livingstone 2008 www). And in autumn 2010 the warehouse was demolished giving way to the realisation of the new plans which are estimated to have been completed by 2013 (fig. 2.5, fig. 2.6).[47]

The planning proposals, which involved the demolition of the warehouse, intend the erection of five buildings on the 21 Wapping Lane site. The initial proposal in 2004 suggested the composition of buildings from 4 to 23 storeys, which would provide 311 dwellings. The proposal in 2008 comprised of 4 to 21 storeys and 380 dwellings, whereas according to the Full Planning Permission the height of the five

[45] See PDU/1040/01 (GLA (9 February 2005) www).
[46] See PDU/1040a/01 (GLA (25 April 2007) www).
[47] It is worth noting that managing waste and recycling is in the agenda of the construction company. In November 2010, in one of my visits to the site, the building was in the process of being pulled down. Speaking with a worker, who knew that the space had been used for a performance, I was informed that all the materials, brick and concrete (the brick walls on the basement were particularly thick and difficult to demolish), were refined through special machines brought on site, and they would be laid down to the foundations of the new building, whilst steel was put into the container and would be transported for recycling (fig. 2.7).

buildings appears to range from 3 to 19 storeys – whilst the maximum height of the whole construction is set at 70.15m Above Ordnance Datum (Tower Hamlets Council www). Also, the initial plan proposed 992 sq.m. office space and 323 sq.m. community use space, whereas the final plan proposed 887 sq.m. non residential floorspace in total, including office space and community use.[48] Planning permission has been given despite the fact that 30 out of a total of 41 individual consultation responses from the local community, sent to Tower Hamlets, were against the realisation of the project.[49] The reasons for the objections included the scale and form of the five constructions, the large number of dwellings and the potential noise and pollution.

Eulysses Limited is part of the Ballymore group of companies, which was also one of the two main sponsors of *Faust*. Ballymore Properties Ltd is 'an Irish based international property development company, focused on financing and constructing large-scale projects throughout Europe' as is stated in the *Faust* programme; and which has also financially supported other ambitious cultural projects. Ballymore aspires to provide the area with 'the first major building in Wapping for 10 years' which 'brings a new interpretation of riverside life in distinct, but sympathetic contrast to the old Wapping, an injection of bright urban vitality' (Ballymore www). Despite the attempt of the architects' design to incorporate elements of the surrounding area, such as the texture and colours of materials existing in the area, the shape of the vessels and the wall around the perimeter of the site, and despite Ballymore's attempt to promote their development with consideration to the qualities of Wapping, the construction is in danger of disturbing the character of the area (fig. 2.8).

2.6 *Faust*'s suggestions and limitations

The support of Ballymore for the production of *Faust* raises the question of whether the performance of *Faust* acted as a strategy for familiarising the audience with the location and for advertising the site to new customers (see Crilley 1993 and Hall 1998). And if Ballymore's strategy entails the intention to also change the area's image from an deprived ex-industrial site to a residential one that welcomes and hosts cultural events, its sponsorship of *Faust* obtains particular significance for the reason

[48] See planning reports PDU/1040/01 (GLA (9 February 2005) www) and PDU/1040a/02 (GLA (10 March 2008) www).
[49] See PDU/1040a/02 (GLA (10 March 2008)www); paragraph 38.

that *Faust* was also supported by an established theatre institution, that is, the National Theatre. The participation of the National Theatre in the production of *Faust* connected the seemingly isolated area of Wapping with the cultural centre of the South Bank and specifically the National Theatre, advocating the area's potentiality to produce vibrant spaces.

However, the performance of *Faust* challenged views and uses associated with derelict sites. It promoted an alternative experience not only in theatre terms but also in urban terms; it offered a spatial experience that questioned theatre codes as well as the processes of bringing a neglected space back to the functionality of the city, even in temporal terms. Certainly, *Faust* holds its own limitations concerning the material conditions of the space where it takes place – dimensions of space, as well as rules and regulations which govern it – in addition to the fact of transforming the space without giving any signs of specificity or identity of the space. By masking the building with elaborated installations and devices, the engagement of the audience with the building itself was weakened and did not allow a greater degree of reflection on the specific site.

However, even the very fact that the performance invited the audience to an area that is not categorised as a theatre district or a cultural centre, and to a derelict space which although within the heart of the city remained unknown and unseen, is a significant urban act. It altered the geography of the city, by changing the usual circulation of people (audience) within urban structures, whilst it proposed alternative views of derelict spaces in the city. Hence, the fact that the performance *Faust* did not invite the theatre audience to a well-known theatre space situated in a theatre district or a tourist area of London, but to the residential area of Wapping and its anonymous and abandoned warehouse, shook ideas of predetermined purpose-built edifices and the typical urban order, bringing into light questions regarding what shapes the meaning of spaces and what determines their function. Alternative performance practices, such as *Faust*, empower audiences, providing them not only with alternative experience of performance, but also with alternatives of thinking about derelict spaces, and their characterisations as 'wastelands'. I have also suggested through investigating this case that in order to understand the impact of similar alternative performance practices, it is essential to examine the site, the location and the performance, since their cultural and social meanings interact and 'perform' together in the process of making meaning.

Chapter 3

Practising Urban Space: The *Wapping:audio* Walk

3. Introduction: The *Wapping:audio* walk

'Walk with me' the voice of the narrator on my earphones prompted, as I was about to start experiencing the audio-walk *Wapping:audio* on a Monday morning in 2007. *Wapping:audio* sends its participants out in the city, in a relatively small section of Wapping in East London, where, guided by the recorded voice of the narrator, they listen to her story, whilst being especially attentive to the built environment by physically moving through it. In a way, the audience (using this term in a wider sense of people participating in the audio-walks) conducts performative fieldwork in the urban space on foot. The audience explores city-spaces – their physical appearance, buried stories and transformations – through the walk defined by the artistic product. The engagement of the audience with the urban space and the importance of the performative fieldwork the participant conducts throughout the walk constitute the central focus for the discussion of this chapter.

Moving through the city entails opportunities and restrictions, possibilities and conventions, promises and regulations. Given the complexity of the urban stage, the attempt to analyse the potentiality and the impact of the audio-walk becomes complex and multifaceted. From a materialist point of view, spontaneous and creative movement in the city is controlled and limited by hegemonic practices and ideologies, which prevail within the city. However, alongside alienation, divisions, policies and conventions that can be experienced in the urban setting, possibilities of dreaming, playing and improvising exist. As Edensor puts it, the postmodern city:

> […] is a space of fear and alienation, but also of sensual, fantastic and erotic possibility. As a place of comings and goings, the city promises the possibility of multiple connections, and yet it is also mapped, surveyed, colonized, possessed and regulated. In the city, then, there is ambiguity, complexity and multiplicity. (2000: 124)

Wapping:audio responds to this complexity and multiplicity of the city and gives meaning to the physical space. The difficulty of reading the city becomes a performative element. The audio-walk testifies to the layers of stories and practices that connect and create urban spaces. It indicates a route in the city and attracts the

auditor's focus on this particular space in the city. And this is something that quite often we fail to achieve in our everyday life because of our resistance to connect to the predetermined routes, since the busy city life is overloaded with information, signs, noise, pollution and traffic. The narrative of the *Wapping:audio* audio-walk gives us a reason to consciously be present in space, opens up our awareness, heighten our senses and triggers our imagination. By making us more attentive, but also more connected with the materiality of the cityscape and its stories, it gives us the possibility to create our own version of the city, by relating pieces of urban experience, that otherwise stand fragmented and possibly meaningless.

I am interested in examining this case for what it is *not*. The *Wapping:audio* walk invites the audience member to an area which is *not* a tourist one, *not* a commercial quarter, *not* an archaeological region, *not* a theatre district, *not* a nature reserve. *Wapping:audio* suggests a route within an area of London, which despite its centrality, its proximity to financial, commercial and tourist centres of the city – Wapping finds itself on the threshold of the two global financial centres of London, the City of London and Canary Wharf – remains concealed and refuses to invite passers-by. Until recently, the Wapping area has resisted the density of large constructions, although it is buried among the skyscrapers raised in the west and east side of it. However, the area's vacant lands and its derelict sites combined with its centrality attract new investment, and future plans for its further reconstruction are underway. The walk finishes opposite the 21 Wapping Lane site, in which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the demolition of the warehouse has been completed and the building of big residential structures has started, taking part in the transformation of the area. The production of the area's built environment, its present condition and use, and the signs of its past history become part of the walk. Although the route followed is not a historical route, the past events and the transformation of the area have been imprinted on the materiality of space and play a significant role in the way that the walk resonates with the walker. In the course of *Wapping:audio* small details of its built structures, fragments of the past use, testify to the complexity of the area.

Wapping:audio provides an experiential way of unravelling issues related to urban space and its use. The complexity of the urban environment becomes not only the 'stage' where the audio-walk takes place, but also, its co-creator. Looking at the area as being the stage of *Wapping:audio*, details of the built environment of Wapping become magnified, like the details of theatrical set design, and become meaningful for

the audience as they are woven into the narrative. Urban space becomes a source of inspiration, creativity, and at the same time a co-participant in the performance walk. It is not just a background, but performs with and for the audience; it creates the experience of the audio-walk and consequently of the city itself. Physical space becomes alive, three-dimensional, and it is manifest as a process in time, instead of being considered as a static, abstract representation, detached from physical practice.

In the same line of reasoning, the audience member experiencing the audio-walk is not just an auditor, but a participant; the audience becomes an actor upon the urban stage, who collects information, acquires empirical knowledge about the city and reflects on its production. The physical movement of the participant makes the performance happen, and she/he transforms space by using it differently – as a performance space – thinking about it differently, as a collection of stories and experiences, and by imagining it differently, by adding or removing information to it, synthesising her/his own version of the story about the space she/he walks in; the participant becomes part of the performance-making but also space-making process. The walker is immersed into different layers of city life and composes her/his own experience, depending on her/his interest and what happens at the moment she/he experiences the walk. As David Pinder puts it, the walk of the audio-walk participant is 'a highly specific experience', since '[i]t is different according to mood, circumstances, events as well as the identity of the individual walker. It will clearly not be experienced by people in the same way' (2001: 15).

Accordingly, from a performative perspective the audio-walk is a way of experiencing and understanding the city, but it is also a way to change the city. The audience re-discovers and re-makes the city through the otherwise everyday activity of walking. The participant's walk is a way of not only reading the city but also speaking the city. Her/his walk takes part in the process of revealing the hidden sides and stories of the city; intervening in the customary function of urban space and resisting to prevailing practices and representations of the city. The audio-walk creates 'a different sense of space and time' (2001: 7), as Pinder puts it, and city-spaces are revealed and altered by the walker.

Walking as a mode of travel, but also as a spatial practice, encourages creative responses to urban space and generates critical reflection. Through its rhythmical movement, walking 'generates a kind of rhythm of thinking' (2001: 5) and finds its place between 'being and doing' (2001: 5), as Rebecca Solnit puts it. The walker

absorbs, translates, imagines and transforms the multiple stimuli of the environment; she/he reflects on space by being in it; walking and thinking come in tune, and support walker's participation in a creative practice. Jane Rendell observes that '*[w]here* I am makes a difference to who I can be and what I know' (2003: 230, italics original). She identifies the tendency of recent theoretical discourses to employ spatial terms such as '"mapping", "locating", "situating", "positioning" and "boundaries"' for analysing 'new ways of knowing and being' (2003: 230). In the course of *Wapping:audio*, by situating ourselves within the area, and literally changing our position through walking, we come to see and know city-spaces from different perspectives. Tim Ingold explains that the experience of an object from many perspectives affects our knowledge and takes part in the process of our understanding. He says:

> To perceive a thing from different angles, it is supposed that we might turn it around in our hands, or perform an equivalent computational operation in our minds. But in real life, for the most part, we do not perceive things from a single vantage point, but rather by walking around them. (2004: 331)

Thus, 'walking is itself a form of circumambulatory knowing' (2004: 331), as Ingold says. It is an act of re-positioning ourselves within the cityscape that deepens our connection and comprehension of the physical space in which we live.

Walking has attracted the attention of many artists, as way of exploring the relationship of performance and art with physical space. From Bruce Nauman's video performance piece 'Walking in an Exaggerated Manner, around the Perimeter of a Square (1967-1968) to the landscape creations of Richard Long (see Macfarlane 2009 and Long 2009); and from Francis Alÿs's interventionist's *paseos* (walks) (see Godfrey et al. 2010) to Robert Smithson's 'A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic' (1967), an exploration of neglected industrial landscapes, (see Smithson 1996); and from Fiona Templeton's *You – the City* (see Garner 2002) and Wrights and Sites' *A Mis-Guide to Anywhere* (see Hodge et al. 2006), to Tehching Hsieh's 'One Year Performance 1981-82' (see Heathfield and Hsieh 2009); walking has been epitomised as a human physical action, which at the same time carries artistic, political and social dimensions.[50]

Considering the increased interest in the theme of walking in the context of performance practice as well as in urban studies, ethnography, sociology and

[50] Also for a collection of artists that worked on the theme of walking see the publication of the exhibition *Walk Ways* (Independent Curators International 2002).

performance studies, I examine the relationship of urban walking, urban planning, and architecture. I argue that *Wapping:audio* is a performative response to the city that through walking, appropriates and alters space, creating its own architecture. The performance mode of audio-walk transforms the otherwise everyday practice of walking into a process of creating, but also attending a performance. Walking is employed by artists as a process of performance-making, since they visit the spaces for which the audio recording is subsequently created. Walking is also a mode of 'spectatorship', a way of experiencing performance. Artists decide the route which is followed during the audio-walk, and which elements along that route come into focus. Afterwards the audience makes its own synthesis of the built environment and the story heard. All of this takes place 'on the move'.

The questions that I consider through the investigation of *Wapping:audio* are: what is the potential (and scope) of *Wapping:audio* in urban terms and especially in relation to architecture and the use of urban space? What kind of knowledge does the performance walk offer us in relation to the city? How does it challenge our reading and speaking of the city? What does *Wapping:audio* suggest for urban walking and how this may affect urban planning and the production of the cityspaces? In what ways can an artistic project such as *Wapping:audio*, alter our concepts and enthusiasm concerning architectural practice and the act of walking in the city? What can we learn as audience/inhabitants of the city by attending the audio-walk? How can people's stories or people's walk produce space differently?

In this chapter I discuss how space is produced through the spatial practice of performance walk and the value of it, in terms not only of the performance outcome but also of the urban planning and architecture. Given the complexity and multiplicity of urban space, I consider it important to employ a combination of a materialist and a performative analysis, since, as Jen Harvie argues, through the combination of these two critical strategies a deeper and more detailed analysis can be achieved (see Harvie 2009b). In a materialist approach, I identify restrictions placed upon urban streets, by looking at the ways that urban planning and architecture affect our attitudes towards walking and city-spaces. Whereas in a performative approach, I focus on the power of audio-walks as a spatial practice that contributes to the production of space and thus of the cityscape. As we have seen in the introduction, according to Lefebvre the production of space is entangled with material processes, representational practices and the appropriation of space in everyday life (1991: 38-39). *Wapping:audio*

constitutes a way of understanding the dynamic relationship between the materiality of space, how space is represented and the way that space is used and physically experienced.

3.1 The practice of audio-walks: *Wapping:audio*

In *Wapping:audio* the participant, having downloaded (for free) the instructions and the audio file from the Internet website of the artists (Wapping:audio Tour www) to a portable audio player, chooses the date and time that she/he wants to experience the walk that begins outside Wapping Underground Station (fig. 3.1). The location, duration and narrative have been chosen by the artists Matthew Ball, Katie Day and Elyssa Livergant; the project was funded by the Arts Council of England and launched in 2005. The recording starts with a smooth breathing reminiscent of the sound of soft waves. The narrator's voice – one of the 'remains' of the area – is reassuring; she is an inhabitant of the neighbourhood for many years and her confident and persuasive way of talking gives you confidence that she can lead you securely though the walk. For 40 minutes she guides you around the streets of Wapping and shares with you her story of living in the area, her memories as well as her present with you.

She invites you to a garden, the River Thames (fig. 3.2), a park, a cemetery and Wapping's canal; she remembers her dead mother, a man with whom she fell in love once and who sailed away, the airplanes flying in the sky during the war, and the happy moments in her schoolyard from which the only remnant is a pillar, which is hardly visible because of wild plants growing around it (fig. 3.3), standing alone in a fenced land used as a car park (fig. 3.4). Signs of dereliction and abandonment in the built environment indicating the disappearance of previous activity and use of the area coincide with the woman's experiences. Although there is a feeling of loss evident in the narration, the quality of the narrator's voice, the fact that she 'walks' with the audience in the present time and space, as well as the pleasure she seems to take from having a listener (probably as many elderly people do when they have company to narrate their stories to), do not make the itinerary a sad adventure of a life past.

Wandering the streets with her you find yourself in different spaces and times at once; creating a sense of 'urban space-times' (Pinder 2001: 15). The narrator's memories, her stories and descriptions, make you imagine the space's past, which intersects with the reality confronted in space. You find yourself in-between past and

present, imagined and existent space – sounds from the recording unifying with sounds of the physical space and imaginary people coming from the narration, stand where people pass by. Fictional situations take place within the reality of the city and give diverse meanings to the city, contributing to the urban experience. The synchronicity of the steps of the narrator with your own (it was a smart choice that an elderly woman performs as your guide) is easily achieved and the relatively slow pace makes the rhythm of the walk comfortable and allows you to absorb the surroundings. The materiality of the cityscape becomes the central focus of the artwork, to which an imaginative layer is added through the narration.

The narration concerns an imaginative story and not a real testimony of people living or who lived at this place. The audio-walk was devised by using the stories of interviewed residents as stimulus material, and written stories about the Wapping area, as well as the experiences of the creators as they walked along the route themselves. The creators deployed a variety of elements needed to make a stimulating journey; narrative, they paid attention to when and in which density the narration is heard along the route, they characteristically say: 'the walker had more "head space" to listen to the narrative when the space they were passing through was less interesting architecturally' (Ball www: 10). Soundscape: they used sounds that corresponded to the sites and the narrator's story and emotions. Route: they indicated a rather short trail through the area. Sites: they selected spaces that were architecturally engaging. And timing: they took into consideration the walker's pace (see Ball www).

The audio-walk follows, in some respects, the basic principles of the audio guides of museums and art galleries – an individual walk with a set of headphones from which a recorded voice guides the listener around space and gives information about the artworks. However, in the case of audio-walks the exhibits are elements of the cityscape – the streets, the buildings, the parks, the stories and the atmosphere of the city's area – it takes place outside the spaces identified and assigned as cultural spaces such as theatre spaces or museums. Certainly, the multiplicity of the phenomena that happen in urban space form a challenge for artists and audience. Although in many cases the activities or specific encounters are expectable, in others the small details or even big changes in the landscape are unpredictable and uncontrollable by the artists. The degree of risk taken is significant, since the performance audio-walk moves outside the cultural shells of theatre spaces that offer protection and physically close the outside world behind their walls, restricting

communication with the city landscape, creating an isolated and controllable environment for audience and artists.[51]

The performance practice of audio-walks has attracted the interest of many contemporary artists that take over the public space of the city.[52] Different artists respond differently to the built environment and they call for different responses or engagements from their audiences as well. Janet Cardiff's *The Missing Voice (Case Study B)* (launched in 1999 and commissioned by Artangel) takes the participant for a walk around the Whitechapel area, creating a cinematic atmosphere that underlines people's alienation within a busy city (see Pinder 2001 and Harvie 2004). *Linked* (launched in 2003), that takes place along the M11 Link Road, gives voice to the people's memories before the M11 dichotomised their land causing the destruction of hundreds of houses and their displacement (see Linked www, Miller and Lavery 2005, Lavery 2005, and Miller and Butler 2005). *And While London Burns*, an operatic tour, which takes place in the middle of the financial centre of London, calls for reflection on corporation practices and environmental issues (see And While London Burns www, Schmidt 2010, and Welton 2012).

Examples, like the aforementioned, show that audio-walks seek to speak their own version of the city; and by doing so, they take ownership of city-spaces. As Graeme Miller asserts: '[w]e write ourselves into the landscape. We own space because we can tell stories about it' (Miller and Lavery 2005: 161). *Wapping:audio* constitutes a prime example of the practice of audio-walks that promotes its own story about the city; whereas the participant who travels through space creates new links and discards others and achieves 'in a fairly minor way, to *alter* space, to participate in its continuing production' (Massey 2005: 118, italics original). *Wapping:audio* challenges established concepts in relation to urban walking and use of spaces, and particularly the streets in the city; it empowers audiences to experience the city otherwise, but also provides people with the chance of recognising the possibility of speaking the city differently.

I argue that the experience of *Wapping:audio* through walking creates its own architecture; an architecture that derives from appropriating and altering space,

[51] Of course, in some cases, such as the Royal Court Theatre and Camden People's Theatre in London, city life penetrates the theatre space by sending the buzzing of the cars, the sirens, or the rumbling of the tube inside the space.

[52] Audio-walks have also drawn the attention of established corporations, which have sponsored their production for a wide use from people in the city (see Butler 2006: 896-898, 906).

without, however, shadowing the established principles that govern architectural practice which seek permanent structures. I suggest that *Wapping:audio* is a performative response to the city that provides a way of intruding into the thick and seemingly unbroken grid of the city-scape, witnessing its fissures and imagining a different space, a space that is in transience. *Wapping:audio* embodies Lefebvre's 'right to the city' (Lefebvre 1996), by not only practically reclaiming the streets as potential spaces for encounter, creation and experiencing the city on foot, but also as a way of imagining another urban architecture.

3.2 The unknown terrains of the city

In 1947 John K. Wright in his article 'Terrae Incognitae: The Place of the Imagination in Geography' stated that '[n]owadays geographers seldom or never have the opportunity to enter literal *terrae incognitae* – totally unexplored territories' (1947: 2, italics original). And he continues, '[a]t no place on this planet is the shadow so utterly dark as it was in former times. Science has reached a point where we may interpolate sound, if incomplete, geographical knowledge into every gap' (1947: 3). Indeed, in the light of the rapid development of technology and science, 'unexplored territories' seem to not exist anymore. With advanced cartographic systems every piece of the earth has been recorded on maps, diagrams and tables. Scientific geographical knowledge has been expanded to include the whole Earth's surface and supports claims that there is no territory that is unseen, which implies that the potential to discover new territories has been diminished. However, we should ask what kind of knowledge we attain with the devices of measuring and representing space, and re-examine and re-define the existence of 'unknown terrains': 'whether or not a particular area may be called "unknown" depends both on whose knowledge and on what kind of knowledge is taken into account' (1947: 2). For example, even if for early European geographers and mapmakers a region remained terra incognita after they 'had presumably consulted all available sources of information', it was known 'to their inhabitants, if any, and frequently to peoples of other civilizations as well' (1947: 2) as Wright observes.

Characterising a land as unknown is a matter of what kind of knowledge is required, what point of view is adopted and what the scale of the examination is. Therefore, we may know that Wapping is in East London and is part of the Docklands and Tower Hamlets, and we may be informed about its geographical position in

relation to the wider picture of London through a map. However, even in a detailed version of a map, spatial stories and details of spatial elements and their uses that make the built space alive cannot be discerned. There are areas that remain unknown to us. Before I headed to experience the audio-walk, I downloaded and printed the Wapping Audio Tour Map which accompanied the sound files on the website (fig. 3.5).[53] On the *Wapping:audio* map there are two signs of London's Underground stations, one is supplemented with the name 'Wapping'; whilst the second with an arrow, which shows beyond the map and the name 'Shadwell & DLR'. The map illustrates the name of the main streets of the area of the audio-walk, among them are the name of Wapping Lane, Wapping High Street and Scandrett Street; but it gives no information beyond this area and how it is connected to the rest of London. A section coloured in blue, at the bottom of the map, shows the River Thames, and the name of the London's river is also written on the blue surface. A second arrow points to the left corner of the map, showing the direction to 'St. Catherine's Dock'. A blue colour also appears at the top left hand side were the word 'Canals' is written.

The *Wapping:audio* map, which follows to a great extent the traditional representations of maps and common rules that govern them, does not give details of the urban environment and its stories. It does not make us aware of fine points and actions that alter and determine the urban environment; the vessels that stand aside to Wapping Lane, the water ripples, the light, the damp walls, the embedded bollards on the top of brick walls, the people jogging along the canal, the intensity of the traffic flow, the way the pedestrians negotiate their movements among the automobiles and the buildings, the overgrown weeds in between the tiles, bricks and flagstones. Thus, although the map feeds our knowledge, this is partial confirmation that there is no terra that is 'absolutely cognita' as Wright claims:

> […] if we look closely enough – if, in other words, the cartographical scale of our examination be sufficiently large – the entire earth appears as an immense patchwork of miniature *terrae incognitae*. Even if an area were to be minutely mapped and studied by an army of microgeographers, much about its geography would always remain unknown, and, hence, if there is no *terrae incognitae* today in an absolute sense, so also no terra is absolutely cognita. (1947: 3-4)

Visual representations of space in the form of maps entail specific codes, taxonomies and ordering systems, follow particular organisational rationales and

[53] <www.wappingaudio.org/?page=tourmap> (accessed 14/5/2007).

priorities, and promote specific values and purposes; therefore, they are unavoidably selective (see Wood 1992, Jacob 1996, Tuan 1999, Pinder 2003, and Massey 2005). A map is a figurative representation of space and not space itself; as Massey advocates, 'a map of a geography is no more that geography – or that space – than a painting of a pipe is a pipe' (2005: 106). The information the *Wapping:audio* map provided could by no means substitute the experience of physically being in the spaces depicted. Moving through the streets of Wapping, walking along its paths gave life to the silent map I had in my pocket. I discovered the area, its details, the inscriptions on the surfaces, the textures, I put back on the map spaces of dereliction, and I imagined their stories, creating my own map. This process asserts what Ingold argues: 'we know *as* we go, not *before* we go' (2000: 239, italics original).

As we have seen in the Introduction, Massey argues that space is constantly open and unfinished (2005: 107). She asserts that time and space are strongly interconnected and only if we take this into account, space can be recognised as a product of heterogeneous practices and processes. Thus, '[i]n no way is it a surface' (2005: 107), space is modified from being an arena of a 'firm ground on which to stand' to be 'always unfinished and open' (2005: 107). If we follow Massey's argument, the tendency of controlling space – by the means of map's representation – is contested and the importance of spatial practices and encounters is emphasised. Space becomes a 'sphere of a dynamic simultaneity, constantly disconnected by new arrivals, constantly waiting to be determined (and therefore always undetermined) by the construction of new relations' (2005: 107). In this sense, the idea of maps having established all the routes and connections in the space represented cannot be maintained. Instead, 'there are always connections *yet to be* made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction, or not, potential links which may never be established' (2005: 107, italics original). And although as Massey observes, '[l]oose ends and ongoing stories are real challenges to cartography' (2005: 107), these are the conditions that make space alive, dynamic and fluid, open to accidental discoveries. In the view of space as 'open' and 'unfinished', 'yet to be made', free from codes and symbols that diminish its meaning, space produces and is produced by unplanned encounters.

The *Wapping:audio* experience brings to life the spatial stories of the area. The information given in the *Wapping:audio* map is selective, the zoom of the map into the areas of the audio-walk leaves out the rest of the city, therefore the area's geographical

relation with it is not apparent. The width of the streets and paths is presented to be the same for all them, however, my experience of the walk showed that in some cases pathways were hardly sufficient for a car, whereas other streets could accommodate two traffic lanes. The area along the river remains 'blank'; it does not depict any shape that could indicate the existence of built structures, even though along this area there were big converted warehouses, such as King Henry's Wharf and the stairs that I had to follow in order to reach the water of the Thames. The map did not give away any details of the built environment, the height of the structures, the different levels, the connection of them, or the vacant land next to the park.

Graeme Miller, the creator of the *Linked* audio-walk, sees himself as a cartographer, he characteristically says: 'I look back at my work as cartographer, not with regret, but with a change of attitude. Earthbound, faces and buildings demand my response and force my participation' (Miller www). In a similar way, my immersion in the 'performance space', the city-spaces, made me feel like a kind of geographer who was in charge of conducting fieldwork for producing another kind of map, consisting of experiential knowledge, rather than piled diagrams and data. I had to be attentive and monitor the environment, listen to the instructions and create my paths by observing and adjusting my movements to the surroundings. As Ingold says, our awareness of the environment is formed *along* the paths: '[i]t is not a view from 'up there' rather than 'down here', but one taken *along* the multiple paths that make up a country, and along which people come and go in the practical conduct of life' (2000: 227, italics original).

The participant of the performance walk attains knowledge of the world by *being* in it; she/he does not simply watch from outside a representation of the world, as it happens in the case of a map (or, in the case of a theatre performance, a stage). Through our movement we attain experiential knowledge of space; as Ingold says: 'people's knowledge of the environment undergoes continuous formation in the very course of their moving about in it' (2000: 230). Space is not understood as an exterior surface, or a closed system that accepts no alterations, but it is an ongoing process, the unfinished product of which includes our intervention and awaits our participation.

Walking around Wapping I created my own version of a map, deriving from my experience and imagination,[54] where details usually omitted from formal maps attain specific importance for me, they made me think, they impressed me, they made me dream and imagined the processes took place in the area. Space was not experienced as homogenous entity, seen from a one-point perspective, but it was the product of stories, processes, past and present, which called me to imagine the future. It became a synthesis of stories and routes, whose their endless combinations and versions confirm that 'the world is *not* ready-made for life to occupy. […] Ways of life are not therefore determined in advance, as routes to be followed, but have continually to be worked out anew' (2000: 242, italics original), as Ingold suggests. The course of *Wapping:audio*, gave me the chance to observe the materials, volume, connections, shapes and scale of physical structures from various possible perspectives and not from a fixed point. I experienced the formation and materiality of spatial elements, noticing the relationship of built structures, their direction and geometry, by moving around them and physically changing my perspective. The different uses of the built environment, the transformation of the Wapping area depicted on the built structures, and the story heard by the narrator made space come alive.

3.3 Walking as a version of a story: De Certeau

De Certeau opens his chapter 'Walking in the City' with a view from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center. From up there the city's complexity seems to be legible, whereas down below, the walkers, '[t]he ordinary practitioners of the city […] follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it' (1984: 93). De Certeau defines 'walking as a space of enunciation' (1984: 98) performed by urban pedestrians. The pedestrian creatively tracks her/his route, whilst she/he breaks free from controlling routes and constraints of urban space. In his analysis on ordinary urban walking, de Certeau attempts:

> [...] to locate the practices that are foreign to the "geometrical" or "geographical" space of visual, panoptic, or theoretical constructions. These practices of space refer to a specific form of *operations* ("ways of operating"), to "another spatiality" (an "anthropological," poetic and mythic experience of space), and to an *opaque and blind* mobility characteristic of the bustling city. (1984: 93, italics original)

[54] Whilst, I also practically created another map on paper by adding notes on the map that I had downloaded (fig. 3.5).

Considering '"ways of operating" or doing things' in contemporary society (1984: xi), de Certeau looks for a creative way of 'making'. 'The "making" in question is a production, a *poiesis* – but a hidden one, because it is scattered over areas defined and occupied by systems of "productions" (television, urban development, commerce, etc.)' (1984: xii, italics original), he says. Walking is an act of creation, of poiesis. The pedestrian/user produces new ways of making the city through the gaps appearing in the thick net of established rules of urban space. Walking opens up possibilities and practices within the built environment.

For de Certeau, walkers are the everyday users of the city-spaces who defy, through 'tactics' what is considered to be a 'proper place'. As he exemplifies, '[t]he "proper" is a victory of space over time', whereas a tactic 'does not have a place, a tactic depends on time – it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized "on the wing"' (1984: xix). De Certeau explicitly brings into opposition the weak, who continuously employ tactics, and the powerful, who use 'strategies' which presuppose 'a place that can be circumscribed as *proper (propre)*' (1984: xix, italics original). Tactics are the means by which the 'ordinary practitioners of the city' resist strategies employed by the authoritative, which support stability, classification and regulation. They reject the dominant practices and search for events so as to transform them into opportunities; opportunities that are often hidden or pushed 'into the wings'.

The opposition between tactics and strategies implies an opposition between space and time; tactics and the opportunities they produce have an ephemeral nature, they appear over time, while strategies are connected with the establishment, maintenance and durability of the built environment. Massey disagrees with the dichotomy between the strategies of the powerful and the tactics of the weak that de Certeau proposes. She claims that this dichotomy 'involves a conception of power in society as a monolithic order on the one hand and the tactics of the weak on the other', which results to 'overestimate the coherence of "the powerful"', whilst it 'reduces […] the potential power of 'the weak'' (2005: 45). But most importantly, Massey suggests, this opposition supports the dichotomisation between time and space, rendering space synonymous to stasis and immobility. Instead, she argues for 'an abandonment of that dichotomisation between space and time which posits space both as the opposite of time and, equally problematically, as immobility, power, coherence, representation' (2005: 47).

Despite Massey's legitimate disagreement, the meaning of 'proper' as concerns urban space connected with 'causality and determination' (Lechte 1995: 105) and the appropriation of space through the contingent practice of walking still holds value in how urban space understood and practised. As John Lechte observes 'the random distributions' of urban walkers constitutes 'the aleatory, "noise" dimension of the city […] its life blood' (1995: 105). Lechte, who identifies noise with 'difference and otherness', claims that '[w]ithout noise in this sense the system of the city will die' (1995: 105). De Certeau's analysis of urban walking still offers a creative way of thinking how walking practice empowers pedestrians to claim their own path in city-spaces, and thus, to interpret cityscape in a subjective way.

De Certeau draws a parallel between walking and speech: '[t]he act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered' (1984: 97). Through walking practice the individual speaks her/his engagement (or not) with the surroundings and her/his conformity (or not) to encoded spatial practices: '[w]alking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgress, respects, etc., the trajectories it "speaks"' (1984: 99). Walking speaks the city. It reveals relations, or reverts relations; makes connections, decides paths and improvises on blockages. By choosing certain routes, complying to or avoiding encoded spatial rules, the walker 'condemns certain places to inertia or disappearance and composes with others spatial "turns of phrase" that are "rare," "accidental" or illegitimate'; and this according to de Certeau 'leads into a rhetoric of walking' (1984: 99). *Wapping:audio* is a spatial practice that through walking confirms what de Certeau claims in his analysis and speaks something of the city.

Questioning the use of space, which in the case of walking practice is achieved by following shortcuts and detours, or enrich the course of the walk with '"rare," "accidental" or illegitimate' spatial stories is an essential ingredient of opening up the possibilities of space and attaining a creative and multi-layered dialogue between space and the walker:

> […] a spatial order organizes an ensemble of possibilities […] and interdictions […] then the walker actualizes some of these possibilities. In that way, he makes them exist as well as emerge. But he also moves them about and he invents others, since the crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements. […] if on the one hand he actualizes only a few of the possibilities fixed by the constructed order (he goes only here and not there), on the other he increases the number of possibilities (for example, by creating shortcuts and detours) and prohibitions

> (for example, he forbids himself to take paths generally considered accessible or even obligatory). He thus makes a selection. (1984: 98)

In this process of selection exists the dynamic effect of walking on experiencing, but also shaping the city-spaces. De Certeau explains that enunciation assumes 'realizing, appropriating, being inscribed in relations, being situated in time' (1984: 33). In urban walking, in which temporality is inherent, enunciation is produced by the way the walker realises city-spaces (creates shapes, covers distances, highlights the city's components); how she/he appropriates spaces through her/his movement and engagement (uses the pavement or the street, the shortcuts or diversions); how she/he creates relations so far with the built environment as with other co-walkers in the city streets (buildings and people that ask for movement's negotiation). The spatial order is confirmed or discarded by the walker's footsteps, whose 'intertwined paths give shape to spaces' (1984: 97). Despite the increasing effort, especially in contemporary city-spaces, of regulating and functionalising all the possible routes spreading in the city's net, walking remains an act dependent on the idiosyncratic movements of the individual that contests the space as imagined and materialised by urban planners and architects.

3.3.1 Moving through the urban streets

> Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs. Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull. (Jacobs 1961: 29)

The connection among building structures in the form of streets, as well as the streets' capacity and potential for use, attains a great importance in city planning, as well as in the way people travel and experience their city. The interests and priorities of city planning in the formation and regulation of the streets affect people's circulation; whilst these often come into conflict with concepts that support the freedom of pedestrian movement. Edensor in his chapter 'Moving Through the City' considers 'movement as a species of performance' (2000: 121) and he agues that because of the reinforced meanings and practices appeared in the organisation of the city, movement becomes inevitably constrained, thus 'most performances are "regulated" improvisations' (2000: 124). Indeed, from a materialist perspective, streets do restrict and regulate pedestrians' movement. Concepts and practices of urban

planning predominately support the organisation of a city that requests spatial order; that seeks building boundaries, which clearly demarcate private and public; and a city that promotes a commodified exchange, rather than a social or even a playful exchange. Deprived of the unexpected and also from the improvisatory qualities of movement, streets become merely functional elements.

The audio-walk as a performance practice supports the idea of urban space and specifically the street being a space for encountering and exploring, as well as an inspirational source for artistic creation. By walking in the course of the audio-walk, the participant has the chance to experience the city's structures and the practices that occur in the urban space, as well as to imagine the stories behind its concrete and brick buildings; behind its functional spaces and relics. The audio-track set the participant in motion to discover an unknown territory, or to view from another perspective one already known. It deregulates mobility and it makes it a means for an enjoyable journey where the streets become paths of experience, knowledge and fantasy. In order to understand the potential power of audio-walk in changing our engagement with city-spaces and practices occur in them, I discuss how concepts and practices, mainly in urban planning, have neglected or restricted pedestrian movement, and have rendered the urban street an urban tool merely for transportation rather than experience.

In his renowned book *Flesh and Stone* (1994) Richard Sennett discusses how new discoveries in 17th century medical science made by William Harvey about the circulation of the blood and respiration affected planners' ideas about the flow of people in the city. 'Planners sought to make the city a place in which people could move and breathe freely, a city of flowing arteries and veins through which people streamed like healthy blood corpuscles' (1994: 256), Sennett explains. In the 19th century, city planning altered the application of the cities' arteries and veins and while the movement of individuals in the city was encouraged, the movement of groups had to be reduced so 'individuals [were] protected by movement from the crowd' (1994: 324). The streets, the veins of the city, had started being turned into regulated channels that aimed to restrict city's 'blood', that is its people. Besides this, the 19th century's invention of the train (see Cresswell 2006) and the development of the road network (see Borden et al. 1996) had an impact on how city-spaces were designed as well as on the relationship between travel and time. It was the beginning of an era in which mobility became an imperative, and the demand for covering long distances in large

scales in a very short period of time increased. This combination, of covering long distances in the minimum time possible, led to the 'shrinking' of space and the phenomenon that Harvey calls 'time-space compression' (1989: 240). A series of implications that affect not only theoretical concepts about temporality and spatiality, but also practical issues of living and consequently human experience follow the occurrence of 'time-space compression'. Thus, for instance, the prioritisation of the transport system over the movement on foot in the urban design and planning has deeply affected the way people experience the spaces they live in or travel through.

The streets have been rendered to be merely 'connectors' (Ingold 2007: 75); they serve to connect destinations, not spaces for offering experience in themselves. According to Ingold the line that he calls 'connector' is associated with the modality of travel that he calls transport, a main difference of which from wayfaring is that 'transport is destination-oriented.' (2007: 77). 'Transport […] is tied to specific locations' and the lines of transport appeared as 'a network of point-to-point connections' (2007: 84). Thus, '[w]hile on the trail the wayfarer is always somewhere, yet every 'somewhere' is on the way to somewhere else' (2007: 81), the transported traveller 'who departs from one location and arrives at another is, in between, nowhere at all' (2007: 84). Accordingly, the streets cease to be spaces of wandering and exploration; they do not creatively contribute to inhabitants' experience of the city. They principally become means that facilitate the conveyance of people and goods and they fail to grow organically within the city's net. Ingold explains:

> From time to time in the course of history […] imperial powers have sought to occupy the inhabited world, throwing a network of connections across what appears, in their eyes, to be not a tissue of trails but a blank surface. These connections are lines of occupation. (2007: 81).

And he continues:

> Perhaps what truly distinguishes the predicament of people in modern metropolitan societies is the extent to which they are compelled to inhabit an environment that has been planned and built expressly for the purposes of occupation. The architecture and public spaces of the built environment enclose and contain; its roads and highways connect. Transport systems nowadays span the globe in a vast network of destination-to-destination links. (2007: 102)

The immediate experience with the urban environment is diminished since the travel by a vehicle has become dominant. We experience the city's veins by being immobile or through 'micro-movements' (Sennett 1994: 365) by being car-drivers and

passengers.[55] We often lack immediate contact with the spaces we pass through, while our experience becomes fragmented and as Sennett observes: 'each fragment has its special function – home, shopping, office, school – separated by empty patches from other fragments' (1994: 366). The streets have become mainly means for travelling by a motorised means of transport, whilst pedestrians' movement has been highly directed and regulated in serving the circulation of vehicles. In many cases motorways have been 'thrust into the delicate tissue of our cities' (Mumford 1964: 178); they are frequently traced on the land and they pass through the urban environment, which is at the cost of pedestrian roads, residential spaces and parks. At the same time, they render the space neutral, highly regulated and deprived from sensorial stimuli. In cities' streets the traveller should not be obstructed in her/his journey; she/he should travel smoothly and fast, avoiding distractions. As Sennett observes: '[t]he logistic of speed […] detach the body from the spaces through which it moves; highway planners seek, for reasons of safety if nothing else, to neutralize and standardize the spaces through which a speeding vehicle travels' (1994: 365). The streets, especially the highways, have become impersonal spaces that regulate pedestrians.

The demand for speed has also affected concepts of travel time; 'time spent travelling is economically unproductive and is therefore to be regarded as wasted time' (2008: 862) as Laura Watts and John Urry point out, therefore it has to be diminished. In their research presented under the title 'Moving Methods, Travelling Times', Watts and Urry focus on the time spent within public transport and they exemplify that there is little evidence that connects travelling time and productivity. They conclude that travel time is 'not always wasted, unwanted, or minimised, but filled with highly valued activities' (2008: 871). However, travel-time is considered valueless by urban planners and policy makers, therefore its reduction constitutes one of the main targets in city planning.

Urban planning strives to achieve the coverage of distances in as little time as possible and to decrease congestion problems. Nevertheless, despite the advanced technologies that have aided the development of transportation system, the congestion that appears in cities has led to the increase of travel times. Thus, for instance, in 1999 the Urban Task Force states that in England '[t]he average commuting time' was '40%

[55] For a discussion on automobility in relation to de Certeau's theory on spatial practices in the city and everyday life see Nigel Thrift's article 'Driving the City' in which he argues that driving and 'passengering' entail their own kind of embodied experiences, related to emotions and senses, and they have 'their own distinctive histories often still waiting to be written' (2004: 46).

higher than 20 years ago' (UTF 1999: 101). In the *Transport Ten Year Plan 2000*, published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) in 2000, one of the main aims sought to be achieved was to reduce time spending on roads and public transport and tackle congestion. The plan directly connects time with productivity and asserts that time delays 'represent a substantial direct cost to business', affecting the wider economy and competitiveness (DETR 2000: 58). In the plan it is claimed that the proposed changes in transportation system, the cost of which was £180 billion for the decade 2001/02 to 2010/11 (DETR 2000: 3), 'will increase productivity and cut business costs by making journeys quicker and more reliable' (DETR 2000: 58). However, despite this large amount of money intended to spend for transport infrastructure, according to the National Travel Survey (NTS) in 2010, the time that people spent travelling over the last 15 years had remained almost the same – on average this is 368 hours per year between 1995/97 and 2010 (NTS 2010). And this is surely connected with the attitudes that govern urban planning and policies in relation to non-motorised methods of travelling. I expand on this point in the following section where I look specifically at urban planning and walking.

3.3.2 Walking and urban planning

Urban design and urban planning play a significant role to the degree that walking is chosen as a transport means and is encouraged as a recreational activity. However, design and planning have not always been in support of pedestrian movement, whilst priority has been given to the automobile. Ann Forsyth and Michael Southworth note that mainly because of the expansion and development of the transportation system in the earlier century, 'pedestrian access has declined steadily in most cities' (2008: 1). The increased use of automobiles and the request of order and functionality of modern planning led to the degradation of pedestrian routes and often to their replacement by roadways. By prioritising automobiles, movement on foot has been made a hard task for pedestrians. As Forsyth and Southworth observe: '[t]he automobile-oriented values of classical modernism have been codified in the transportation and street design standards that we struggle with today' (2008: 1).

In the early 1960s, Lewis Mumford in his *The Highway and the City* observed the expansion of roads and highways in American cities, and the increasing use of the automobile, and he warned that these would destroy the cities' fabric. He says: '[n]either our cars nor our highways can take such a load. This over-concentration,

moreover, is rapidly destroying our cities, without leaving anything half as good in their place' (1964: 177). Almost ten years later Lefebvre, in his *The Urban Revolution* (2003), notes that the consequences of '[t]he invasion of the automobile' are 'harmful to urban and social life' (2003: 19). Whilst he certifies that '[t]he day is approaching when we will be forced to limit the rights and powers of the automobile. Naturally, this won't be easy, and the fallout will be considerable' (2003: 19).

The neglect of walking as a transportation mode by urban planning that led to a shrinkage of pedestrian movement, was, for Mumford, a central issue that had to be acknowledged and altered: '[w]e must re-plan the inner city for pedestrian circulation […] In our entrancement with the motorcar, we have forgotten how much more efficient and how much more flexible the footwalker is' (1964: 185-186), he wrote. Like Mumford, Jane Jacobs (Jacobs 1961), explains that in order to make walking appealing, urban planning should consider mixed-use areas as its planning principle and discard the single-purpose zones which fragment the city and do not encourage footwork to take place from one district to another. For achieving a diversity in the city, Jacobs says that 'the district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably more than two […] On successful city streets, people must appear at different times' (1961: 152). Besides, as Mumford notes, 'only the mixed zones are architecturally interesting today despite their disorder' (1964: 186). Mumford claimed that urban planning should consider the place of the pedestrian within the city and 'put the pedestrian at the centre of all its proposals' (1964: 186). He argued that '[n]o city can solve its transportation problem if it neglects the greatest self-propelling vehicle of all: the pedestrian' (1964: 127). However, for this to be achieved the pedestrian has to be treated with 'respect and honour' (1964: 186). Mumford, in the following quotation, describes vividly how effective walking can be:

> A hundred thousand pedestrians can cover half a mile in a fraction of the time that sixty-six thousand motor vehicles, each carrying one and a half persons – our average American occupancy – can carry them. And at the end of their walk, they would, even if they all suddenly decided to sit down, require a similarly minute fraction of the motorcar's wasteful parking space. (1964: 127)

The situation of the streets taking over the city and building up barriers for movement on foot seems to have started not only being acknowledge by urban planners but also considered seriously in the proposed plans. In the last few years walking has been re-evaluated as an environmentally friendly way of moving through

the city. Forsyth and Southworth explain that in the last few decades the exertion of urban designers for more *walkable* cities have found support by new health research, new urban regulations and the amplified activism by pedestrians and bicyclists (2008: 1). Changing attitudes towards the city's circulation system and its priorities has become an imperative, since urban centres are mostly overpopulated and environmental consequences of previous choices and priorities given to the city design and planning have become evident. Forsyth and Southworth emphasise that walking – like cycling – 'is a 'green' mode of transport that not only reduces congestion, but also has low environmental impact, conserving energy without air and noise pollution' (2008: 1), and they claim that '[w]alkability is the foundation for the sustainable city' (2008: 1).[56] Apart from seeing walking as a utilitarian mode of travel, they also point out the social value of it. They characteristically say: '[i]t is also a socially equitable mode of transport that is available to a majority of the population, across classes, including children and seniors' (2008: 1).

The consideration of alternative city plans for use of streets and pedestrian routes are now on the agenda of the urban planners. In 1999, Richard Rogers and the members of Urban Task Force argued that in order to tackle the increasing urban traffic congestion and energy consumption, and improve the transportation system in England, 'the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users' should be prioritised (UTF 1999: 87). They pointed out the necessity for a planning strategy that could reduce the need for a car travel and increase the choice for walking. They observed that '[w]hilst increased mobility is a sign of vitality and contributes to a healthy level of street-life, vehicular traffic should not dominate the experience of the pedestrianized street' (UTF 1999: 90). And they suggested that 'public routes within a neighbourhood should be designed to provide the appropriate environment for pedestrians first, and then vehicles of different types' (UTF 1999: 90). Especially, for small local streets they considered that planners should re-think ways so as streets 'work as social places' and not as 'transport corridor[s]' (UTF 1999: 93).

They observe that '[i]n many parts of urban England, walking is a dreadful experience of trying to negotiate obstacles, moving and non-moving, which prevent you from getting where you want to go' (UTF 1999: 95). The main reason for this is that the complexity of the urban space blurs the purposes and the priorities of urban

[56] In 2009, it was estimated that 39% of all energy consumption in the UK was related to transport. (TSGB 2010b www).

streets, therefore, for example, the UTF asks whether '[w]e have to decide on the main purposes of our urban streets. Is Brixton High Street primarily a local district centre and meeting place, or is it principally the main road from London to Brighton? Which takes priority?' (UTF 1999: 95). In order to make a street a social space that encourages footwork, the UTF made some suggestions, such slowing down traffic by using limits of 20mph and the introduction of Home Zones – based on German and Dutch planning model – in which 'pedestrians have absolute priority and cars travel a little more than walking pace' (UTF 1999: 94). Home Zones function like zebra crossings where drivers lose their priority and dominance. Also, the improvement of the design of the street by employing well-designed street furniture, public art and planting and the creation of defined pedestrian routes that 'respond to "desire lines" and connect the places where people want to go in a direct and convenient way' (UTF 1999: 95).

A year after the UTF report, a plan was presented by the Department of Transport (DfT 2000 www) under the title 'Transport Ten Year Plan 2000'. This aimed to reduce congestion, to improve road safety and advance public transport facilities. Although the plan seemed to recognise the value of non-motorised transportation, such as walking and cycling, it did not explicitly state through which measures and policies these modes of transport would be encouraged and how the built environment would become safe for them. Thus, one of the targets of the plan, which was to triple the number of cycling trips during the decade 2001/02 to 2010/11, seems to not have been achieved. According to the NTS between the period 2000/02 and 2010 the trips made by bicycle has seen a fall of about 7% (NTS 2010b www).[57] Whilst the statistics in 2010 show that since 1995/97 there is a fall of 28% in walking trips (NTS 2010b www).

There was also a fall of 5% of car driver trips since 1995/97 (NTS 2010b www) and a decrease of the motor vehicle traffic levels between 2007 and 2009 almost 1.0% each year.[58] However, these percentages seem rather small, if we consider that the vehicle traffic levels were increased by almost 8% between 1999 and 2009 (TSGB 2010a www); and if we see the larger picture which shows that motor traffic volume

[57] Certainly, we should take into the account that, as the NTS (2010) note, because of the small number of cyclists in the NTS sample the statistical results for bicycle trips are more volatile than these for other methods of travel (NTS 2010b www).

[58] This decrease of traffic levels during two sequential years happened for the first time since 1949 (NTS 2010b www).

in 2009 was 10 times higher than the volume in 1949 (TSGB 2010a www). Whilst the plan aimed to promote public transport, the statistics show a constant increase of households in Great Britain that have access to a car; as the NTS (2010) reports the proportion of households without access to a car fell from 38% in 1985/86 to 25% in 2005, whereas the proportion of households with two or more cars increased from 17% in 1985/86 to 33% in 2010 (NTS 2010a www). The results of these statistics, certainly within their own limits of accuracy, place questions of the adequacy of the methods that have been employed by DETR in their ten-year plan for reducing motorised traffic and considering other ways of moving through the urban streets.

As Forsyth and Southworth suggest, in order to encourage walking 'designers and planners need to go beyond utilitarian access' and that '[i]t is necessary to address the character of the path network, while being aware of the social, economic and policy factors that are key to the overall decision to walk' (2008: 3). Lack of sidewalks, high population density, mixed land uses, safe pedestrian trails, pleasant open spaces, travel distance;[59] play a significant role on the confidence of walker. Recent analysis and research has taken place in built environment and urban planning, in order to record, analyse, interpret and understand people's needs, desires and choices and preferences concerning the pedestrian trips and routes; what walking means for citizens in a town, and how they choose their routes. Thus, for example, researchers in urban planning seek to analyse the impact of characteristics of the physical environment – such as street and pavement width, trees, neighbourhood scale, streetlights, street furniture, open spaces – on walking, and how these take part in shaping an accessible, safe and pleasurable built environment that affect the decision to walk (see Alfonzo et al. 2008). Whereas, researchers, such as Filipa Matos Wunderlich, emphasise that:

> […] beyond the more common parameters typically addressed by design – location, directness, the efficiency and safety of routes etc. – there is scope and the need for qualitative descriptions of walking which inform and inspire design interventions that favour the experience of walking in the city. (2008: 137)

Sonia Lavadinho and Yves Winkin consider 'pedestrian circulations as complex communicative interactions rather than simply functional displacements' (2008: 155), and they show how pedestrian empowerment has forced cities' to change and listen to

[59] According to the National Travel Survey (NTS) in 2010, 77% of all journeys less than one mile in length were undertaken on foot, and 20% undertaken by car (NTS 2010). Whilst according to (TSGB) in the same year, 64% of all trips were made by car compared to 22% by walking and 2% cycling; whereas 78% of the total distance travelled was made by car and 4% by waking and cycling.

walkers needs. They claim that 'urban walkers are nowadays aware of the growing role they play in the city – to the point that they sometimes consider themselves to be an emergent group with precise needs and claims'; thus, 'more and more cities are listening to, responding to, and even anticipating their demands' (2008: 157). Lavadinho and Winkin exemplify that the effectiveness of urban features depends not only on their materiality and functionality, but also in the way that walkers appropriate them, thus, adding a performative dimension to street planning; they say: '[f]or the best urban improvements in terms of walkability may turn into fiascos if they are not embedded in the way people "walk in their minds"' (2008: 166). Urban policies and planning, which in many cases focus on specific areas of the city whilst neglecting others, cannot be successful if public spaces do not address a wider scope for walkers' daily life, and if the values attached to walking are not taken into consideration.

Whilst until this point I have discussed walking from the perspective of urban planning, it is worth thinking of urban planning from the perspective of walking, by which I mean how walking can be employed as a mode for planning and creating urban space. Walking has been used for urban design and planning from Lynch to Stalker's interventions, in an attempt to design otherwise; to find new spatial patterns of organising urban space. In the 1960s, as we have seen in the Introduction of the thesis, Lynch pioneered a way of studying urban space by involving people's views on their built environment, and he achieved this by employing walking as a method of examining urban space (see Lynch 1990). Whilst, more recently, the interdisciplinary group Stalker constitutes an interventionist example of how architecture can be materialised through movement.

Stalker is a collective of architects, researchers, artists and activists which began in Rome in the middle of 1990s, but has since expanded its practice in other European cities as well. They founded the research network Osservatorio Nomade (ON) in 2002 (Osservatorio Nomade www). Stalker uses (collective) walking, calling this practice as 'transurbance': '[t]ransurbance is, just like the erratic journey, a sort of pre-architecture of the contemporary landscape' (Careri 2002: 24). Through transurbances, they explore spaces considered as urban voids. Francesco Careri, a member of Stalker, argues that walking can be used 'as a cognitive and design tool, as a means of recognising a geography in the chaos of the peripheries, and a means through which to invent new ways to intervene in public metropolitan spaces, to investigate them and make them visible' (2002: 26). Architectural projects are

produced through Stalker's immersion in the city-spaces and by mapping spaces that have been neglected from the mainstream architectural practice and conventional urban planning strategies. Their projects encourage participation and propose ways of self-organising spaces. Their responses and interventions derive from their contact and engagement with the spaces visited and they often suggest transformations of the spaces in collaboration with the social groups and communities (often marginalised) that live in these areas (see Careri and Romito 2005 and Lang 2007).

Performance walks, such as *Wapping:audio*, constitute a way of appreciating walking in the city, which in many cases has been saturated with the domination of automobiles. They offer a way of resistance to temporal and spatial practices and concepts that promote the dominance of automobiles, the privatisation of neighbourhoods and regulation of public space (fig. 3.6). Performance walks suggest a way of experiencing the city's streets, away from their mere functionality or commercialisation; and of listening to their hidden stories along the route, which activate the imagination and give rise to the empowerment of walker's experience.

3.4 Walking at Wapping

> Walking the streets is what links up reading the map with living one's life, the personal microcosm with the public macrocosm; it makes sense of the maze all around. (Solnit 2001: 176)

Standing outside Wapping Underground Station, I looked at two roads which intersect; I was not sure where I had to go yet. The traffic was relatively low and the street relatively quiet. The cars parked along the streets looked new and expensive. The few cars passing kept a low speed; a couple of bicycles and a small single-deck bus traversed the road. A couple of people waited outside the station and a few walked along the pavements. The big brick buildings, mainly warehouses, looked silent and at places they presented a tone of colour in their façade – mainly where chains, little platforms and cranes were hanging. I heard the elderly woman saying how this area looked much different now than when she was young and she had to negotiate her movement through the buildings and people that loaded and unloaded ships. It was bustling with life; it was 'like an island' she told me. 'Look over to your left', she said, 'do you see that mini-roundabout? Walk past it and cross the road. Mind the traffic', she continued. Despite my anxiety that derived from the fact that I was taking part in an audio-walk in an area that I was not familiar with, I relatively quickly attained a

sense of safety. This was possibly created by the woman's calm and firm voice – that gave me a sense of reassurance that she knows the area well – and from the fact that the streets of the area seemed peaceful, missing the density of traffic that usually appears in central areas in London. It seemed as a suitable place for a walk in the city.

Following her instructions, 'let's go up this road to the right'; 'just wait here a moment'; 'let's follow the path around to the right and head out throughout this big gate'; 'do you see the church's spire up there on your left? Walk with me there – no need to hurry'; we, the narrator's voice and me, continued the walk through small pathways, alleys and ramps. We went down stairs, we crossed gates, we stepped from the soil to the concrete, we looked high at the trees and looked down at the water of the river. We walked passing buildings with names – King Henry's Wharves (fig. 3.7), Phoenix Warf (fig. 3.8), Oliver's Warf (fig. 3.9)– we read the letters that form the name of the anchored vessels, The Three Sisters and The Sea Lark. I felt like I was participating in a choreographed dance, composed by the audio-walk and the built environment. And if we follow Carl Lavery's response to his collaborator Lawrence Bradby, which claims that the drifter 'is actively engaged with the environment in a disciplined way – like an actor seeking to improvise through structure' (Bradby and Lavery 2007: 45), I could see myself as a drifter that through the structure of the audio-walk and the cityscape, dances an urban dance, and she considers cityscape not as a 'spectacle' (Debord 1994), but a partner of this dance.

The landscape did not pass so quickly as to disappear without giving me the chance to enjoy and explore it. One of the achievements of this walk was the slow pace given. It gave me time to become more aware of the space around me and the stories each building, corner, pillar, alley articulated. And this is especially appreciated if we consider the usual fast pace of the everyday walk crossing the city on foot. Being out of the usual rhythm of the city (Lefebvre 1996: 229), I was given the chance to spend some time observing the materiality of space and the practices occur in it; to pause and take a moment to examine, explore and feel the space around; to let my sight wander around, to turn my gaze backwards or sideways, to escape for a while from the forced forward looking. The destination faded away in my mind and what gained importance was the experience of being there, of travelling.

Walking the route of *Wapping:audio* reminded me the value of small streets and pathways; it made me re-appreciate the peaceful spots within a busy metropolis such as London. It also made me think of the significance of built structures that

remain close to human scale. Compared to the other audio-walks that I had experienced almost the same period as *Wapping:audio* – such as *Linked* and *While London Burns* – walking around Wapping seemed like a walk in a village close to London, and not in London itself. The multi-level vertical structures that I passed when I experienced the *While London Burns* seemed to be far away. And certainly, because of the lack of visual contact with the City of London – apart from one point during the walk where I could see a part of Tower of London[60] – it seemed like these buildings belonged to another city, although they were laid only one and a half kilometres away. The unceasing noise of the cars passing through the lanes of the busy M11 along the route of *Linked* could by no means compare with the few cars and single-deck busses that I saw at the beginning of my walk at Wapping High Street and at the end when I arrived at Wapping Lane.

The walk made me more aware of the small sounds that exist in the cityscape, the sound of the trees, the chirp of the birds, and the sound of the river's water lapping against the walls; and how these could be interrupted by the sound of a passing car, or the sound of an airplane flying in the sky. Most of the sounds that came from my world were united with the narrator's world, creating a jigsaw of the past and the present. But, the walk also made me more attentive to the small details integrated in the built structures of the area, the little statues outside buildings, the bent stone stairs, the church's stopped clock, the damp on the walls, the plants overgrow among the bricks, the signs that prevent climbing and passing and the narrow cobblestoned pathways, as well as the interruption of cobbles in the main street.

At a certain point the cobbles laid on the street ended abruptly and were replaced by tarmac (fig. 3.10). The street was cut across (perpendicularly) with a great precision and one material follows the other. The moment I noticed this I remember that the narrator's voice was mixed with the sound of horseshoes and the sounds of the cars. For me this line became the beginning of exploring traces of the past. The discovery of what was new and what belonged to another time became a kind of game that enhanced my excitement of continuing the walk. And at the same time it made me think about the processes that had transformed this area through time.

[60] When I recently went back to this spot I could see the 'Shard' building designed by Renzo Piano, which is under construction. This impressive and rather aggressive skyscraper in Southwark aspires to be the tallest building in Europe.

The noticeably tidy area of Wapping with suburban characteristics was not always clean and quiet, on the contrary, it was one of the busiest areas not only in London but worldwide during the 19th century. Back then it was regarded as a dirty and almost dangerous place. Wapping High Street, which goes along the river in Wapping and connects St. Katherine's Dock with Shadwell, and which is the starting point of the *Wapping:audio* walk, was 'a filthy straight passage' (Taylor 2001: 23). This was not only because of the physical dirt, but also because it was the place of many sailors, brothels, taverns and pirates, many of whom were hanged on the Execution Dock.

However, Wapping was a lively area, full of activities, inhabitants, professions: 'stevedores, watermen, ship's bakers, marine store dealers, suppliers of rope and tackle, instrument makers and boat builders, carpenters and smiths' (Taylor 2001: 11), and products from all around the world, spices, tea, coffee, wool, silk, wine, which were unloaded from ships' cargoes. Wapping was an exciting area that had to be visited. In 1882, in his book *Walks Through London*, George Alexander Cooke exhorted his potential readers-tourists in London to visit Wapping High Street, in order to see the 'real' London: 'High-street is long and narrow, and though too dirty to be a pleasant promenade, should nevertheless be visited once by all who would wish to see *London as it is*' (Cooke 1833: 190, italics original). Wapping was a place of departure and arrival, a centre of exchange and trade.

The timeworn cobbles testified all the past journeys that took place on their surfaces. Their material seemed to be vulnerable, especially next to the solid tarmac, but at the same time more 'walker-friendly' – and it was because of this that I deviated from what I have been instructed to do, and I walked along it. The cobbled part of the street was part of the story that came from the past, and let me imagine the rides, drives, walks that happened along it. The erosion of the material confirmed how space responds to our actions and choices, and the hidden practices and stories that form the ever-changeable nature of space.

The erosion of spatial elements, such as marble steps, tiled or cobbled walkways, or even the strong metallic coating at the edges of steps is the most visible proof that the walkers do not just read but also 'write' the cityscape. The walker responds physically to the urban environment, and her/his movements are reworked through her/his walk; and even if such movements seem mechanical they 'are never quite the same from one step to the next' (Ingold 2004: 332). But the built

environment also responds to the footsteps of the walker. The signs of the use of physical space indicate that despite the effort of holding the built environment to be unchangeable and unaffected, walking practice has a visible impact on the materiality of space. It transforms it, confirming that 'pedestrian activities can mark the landscape' (2004: 333), as Ingold says. The marks on the ground show how the walker reads the city and how she/he translates it.[61]

Walking through the route of the audio-walk I had a direct experience of the physical qualities of the built environment, I adjusted my movements as I moved through the physical space; I accepted and rejected the prescribed routes and I re-defined their meaning. The performance walk was a chance to 'speak' the city in de Certeau's terms. The streets that often function as utilitarian channels that contain and restrict movement became spaces of exploration and surprise. I participated in the process of altering the meaning of urban streets and transformed them from spaces of confinement and restrictions to spaces of action and engagement, although restrictions were not missing upon my route.

3.5 Creating architecture by moving through Wapping

Architecture finds itself within the tension produced by the necessity for built permanent structures and the need of inhabitants to move through and around them. By marking the landscape and creating stationary and secure spaces, architecture provides the conditions in which occupation, rootedness and permanency can be experienced. Often architectural practice either ignores people's needs and desires for moving freely within a city-space; or it dictates ways in which movement should be enacted, assuming that these correspond best to people's flow. 'Architecture is most often thought of as the creation of spaces, boundaries, senses of attachment, and contextual meaning' (2006: 51), Cresswell says. By organising physical space and creating concrete structures that give shelter to inhabitants, architecture attempts to arrest tendencies and practices, and direct movement; thus, it is often considered as an enemy of mobility. However, mobility is a primary component in inhabitants' experience of urban space, and in the particular case of *Wapping:audio*, is an essential

[61] Marking the cityscape through use is not deemed particularly desirable by architects, as much as a map is considered to have been damaged when it shows signs of handwriting on its surface. As Ingold puts it, in that our feet leave a mark, 'they are said to deface the environment, not to enhance it, much as the topographic map is said to be defaced by the itineraries of travel drawn upon it. This kind of thing is typically regarded by urban planners and municipal authorities as a threat to established order and a subversion of authority' (2004: 329).

part of its performance practice. The way of experiencing the performance is by moving through space (walking); whilst the performance itself has been moved from conventional and controllable performance space to an open space (the city's streets) that constantly moves and changes. Audio-walks are mobile practices that as Toby Butler puts it, 'try to break free from sedentary ideas of what makes a performance space, or a culture', despite the fact that there is 'a strong element of the sedentary or the topophilic' (Butler 2007: 367), as the narrative and the route of the walk is strongly connected with the specific location.

Mobility, with the help of advanced technologies of motion, has been central to Western modernity, and it is often associated with notions of progress, innovation, freedom and flow. 'The modern individual is, above all else, a mobile human being' (1994: 255-56), Sennett states. On the other hand, increased mobility around the world has provoked scepticism and uncertainty, since it is considered as a threat to the stabilised order and to rootedness; it is a cause of disorder and chaos. Cresswell in his book *On the Move* examines the meaning of mobility in the contemporary world and re-evaluates its positive impact on lived experience and thought. Cresswell argues that mobility is entangled with contemporary ways of thinking and living; '[m]obility is a way of being in the world' (2006: 3), he asserts. In order to analyse different views on the notion of mobility, Cresswell employs the two terms, 'sedentarist metaphysics' and 'nomadic metaphysics'. A sedendarist metaphysics considers 'mobility through the lens of place, rootedness, spatial order and belonging' (2006: 26). Therefore, the sedendarist view sees movement across space as a threat to stability and order, which leads to 'anachorism […] a thing out of place or without place entirely' (2006: 55). Whereas a nomadic metaphysics 'puts mobility first, has little time for notions of attachment to place, and revels in notions of flow, flux, and dynamism' (2006: 26). Thus, whatever that is 'based on foundations, static, or bounded', it is considered 'to be reactionary, dull, and of the past' (2006: 25).

Although architecture has often been considered as an opponent of mobility, in architectural theory, the tendency of detaching architecture from movement has been challenged, revealing the inherent connection of physical structures with mobility and flow. 'All architecture functions as a potential stimulus for movement, real or imagined. A building is an incitement to action, a stage for movement and interaction' (Yudell: 59), asserted the architectural theoretician Robert Yudell in 1977. In his theoretical as well as his practical work, the acclaimed French-Swiss architect and

educator Bernard Tschumi has reassessed the interaction of human movement and spatial structures; he has adopted the notion of mobility as the core of his inspiration and architectural praxis:

> For me architecture starts with the concept of mobility. Without mobility there is no architecture. I would go further; it is always said that architecture is static, that it is about substructures, foundations, shelter, safety… Exactly the opposite is true: architecture is always in confrontation with movement, the movement of the bodies that pass through it. For if there were no movement to start with, there would be no architecture. (2003: 29-30)

Tschumi brings into the centre of architectural practice human movement; architecture cannot be static and independent to human mobility. 'What "generates" a building […] is movement, not the envelope or the façade' (2003: 30), he says. The human body is not simply a consumer of an architectural conception, but its movement is a source of intuition and creation; it is through movement, or in a wider view it is through use, that space is produced. Physical movements become 'the intrusion of events into architectural spaces' (1996: 111), which 'violate' the order of architecture. 'Entering a building may be a delicate act, but it violates the balance of a precisely ordered geometry' (1996: 123), Tschumi claims. And this unbalance that is provoked by the physical movement as well as the inability of the architect to defend their creation against the spontaneous or the unexpected, is often what architects are most afraid of. However, for Tschumi, movement constitutes a source of inspiration that comes before architecture. It is a tool for thinking, designing and realising space. By observing and documenting bodies' movements in space and by employing dance notations, photographs and drawings in his architectural practice, Tschumi questions the traditional modes of representation of architecture in the form of plans, sections and axonometrics (see Tschumi 1996: 142-143). At the same time, by doing this, he attempts to merge spatial experience with architectural concepts. Thus, the built environment is not considered as a compilation of static geometrical volumes that imposes restrictions upon movement, but becomes a space for potential events and encounters. 'There is no architecture without action, no architecture without events […] no architecture without violence' (1996: 122), according to Tschumi.[62]

[62] A significant influence on Tschumi's architectural concepts and practice has been performance art. His collaboration with RoseLee Goldberg in 1973, whilst she was director of Royal College of Art, putting forward ten events-exhibitions that combined their disciplines, art and architecture (see Kaji-O'Grady 2008), was a significant moment for developing his thoughts about space and movement and subsequently his concept of architecture and event (see Tschumi et al. 2008). Tschumi's ideas about the interrelation between movement and architecture present similarities with Stalker's view, although

Performance practices, such as *Wapping:audio*, become a stimulant for events and encounters beyond the common use of space. They violate the order of space, since elements of physical space that usually go unseen are magnified and attain particular importance for the participant. Through movement and narrative, the participant collects, decomposes and synthesises the architectural space in an alternative order that allows him/her to imagine the city otherwise. She/he creates her/his own architecture, contesting notions of urban space as fixed and predetermined that reinforce and restrict urban meanings. The participant that experiences the audio-walk is improvising, and although the theme of the improvisation is given, neither the participant nor the director-artist know how the co-participant, which is the physical space, will exactly act; how it will declare its presence. The built environment may channel and block the movement of the body by raising fenced structures or signs that prevent an entrance; it may display street furniture made of cold materials that do not encourage their use; or, it may force the walker to divert from his route by having temporary holes in the ground awaiting a damaged sewer pipe to be fixed. On the other hand, the built environment can offer some pleasant surprises, like an opening that leads to a blossomed park, a wooden bench under the tree leaves, a bird on the head of a statue, colourful doors, a small church made of stone. Thus, the result of the audio-walk experience is the collision and synthesis of the invisible, the personal, the improvisational, and the imaginative with the solid, functional, the supposedly immovable.

In the *Wapping:audio* trail I followed not only the instructions of the voice in the earphones, but also the paths designated by the built environment. Walking along the pavements, the pedestrian streets, taking shortcuts, walking underneath poles and safety nettings, stepping on the soil of parks, stopping and standing in front of the quay; climbing steps, pushing iron gates, standing behind the protective railings, stepping on the graveyard. Disruptions were not missing in my journey; I had to step on the street and walk along it when the pavement was almost missing (fig. 3.11), whilst foliage intruding on the street blocked my passage (fig. 3.12). I wondered, feeling quite worried, how I could reach the platform at the other side of the railings when the iron gate was locked (fig. 3.13). I entered a yard that I was not meant to go

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Stalker's work tends to be more interventionist and it starts with their own physical immersion to the city's open spaces and their discoveries.

into, I wandered aimlessly back and forth in streets of Wapping when I misheard the instructions and I got lost.

The audio-walk creates its own architecture. It is not an architecture that seeks to make permanent structures, but it is an architecture that looks for elements and details in the built environment and joins them together in an alternative structure through movement. Borden's study on skateboarding offers a significant insight into this direction. He exemplifies how skateboarding '*represents* the city without maps, and *how it speaks* something of the city' (2004: 291, italics original). The skateboarder's body 'performs' and 'speaks' its engagement with the city, by using details or leftovers of the city and continually seeking the next one. The skateboarders are indifferent to understanding the city's complicated production processes as well as the established rules, regulations and practices, '[w]hen skateboarders ride along a wall, over a fire hydrant or up a building, they are entirely indifferent to its function or ideological content' (2004: 293), says Borden. Skateboarders critique the contemporary city and generate new meanings and interpretations of the cityscape through their performative practice:

> Its representational mode is not that of writing, drawing or theorising, but of performing – of speaking their meanings and critiques of the city through their urban actions. Here in the movement of the body across urban space, and its direct interaction with the modern architecture of the city, lies the central critique of skateboarding – a rejection both of the values and of the spatio-temporal mode of living in the contemporary capitalist city. (2004: 292)

Skateboarders not only use skateparks, which have been built for this purpose for the last three decades, but mostly use a range of the city's structural elements: pipes, drainage ditches, walls, railings, steps, banks, benches, swimming pools, handrails, pavements, barriers, poles. According to Borden, 'skaters see the city as a set of objects' (2004: 292) and not as an accumulation of built structures with a defined appearance and a prescribed use. Their performance entails a direct and active physical contact with the urban environment, which is renewed every time they place their skateboard on the ground to be ready to start their practice, ignoring the 'proper' use and the established aesthetic values of the built structures:

> They are therefore no longer even concerned with its presence as a *building*, as a composition of spaces and materials logically disposed to create a coherent urban entity. By focusing only on certain elements (ledges, walls, banks, rails) of the building, skateboarders deny architecture's existence as a discrete three-dimensional invisible thing, knowable only as a totality, and treat it instead as a set of floating, detached, physical elements isolated from each other; where

> architects' considerations of building "users" imply a quantification of the body subordinate to space and design, the skater's performative body has, "the ability to deal with a given set of pre-determined circumstances and to extract what you want and to discard the rest". Skateboarding reproduces architecture in its own measure, re-editing it as a series of surfaces, textures and micro-objects. (2004: 293, italics original)

During their practice of skating, skateboarders decompose the city's built structures and they recompose them through their bodily performance. They are unmoved by the intention of planners and architects, which usually in a big city, such as London for example, includes large and ambitious plans and designs. Skateboarders are creating their own 'micro-spaces' within the process of searching for new challenging structural elements and re-editing them in a continuing process through urban space and time:

> Thus while many conceive of cities as comprehensible urban plans, monuments or *grands projects*, skateboarding suggests that cities can be thought of a series of micro-spaces. Consequently, architecture is seen to lie beyond the province of the architect and is thrown instead into the turbulent nexus of reproduction. (2004: 293, italics original)

Skateboarders look for opportunities and new possibilities in the urban environment: '[s]kating is a continual search for the unknown' (cited in Borden 2004: 295) says a practitioner. Experiential knowledge about the details of micro-spaces is not easily represented on paper. Skating resists representation and promotes the living experience of the body and the meaning it inscribes and it speaks in relation to the city by moving through space. Borden compares skateboarders' practice with the practice of the dérive followed by the Situationist International group (2004: 294-5).

The European group Situationist International (1957-1972) attempted to reveal the potentiality of city life and revert the increased constraints on urban experience. By employing unconventional ways of mapping the city and speaking about the city, Situationists critiqued modern society's symptoms, such as the integration of spectacle in social life and politics (see Debord 1994). The Situationist International (SI) was based in Paris and descended from the Lettrism movement, whilst it was also inspired by Dadaism and Surrealism. The transformation of Paris and the effects of Haussmann's reconstruction plans in the second half of the 19th century for its modernisation had a particular impact on Situationists' thought and interventions. Paris became a city 'which, in the name of rational organisation […] lost all sense of itself as a site for poetry, play, situations' (2002: 219), as Andrew Hussey puts it. And

this is what SI wanted to fight against by creating 'a new situation' and a 'unitary urbanism' – both of these concepts were originated in the work and texts of Dutch architect Constant Nieuwenhuys (Ross and Lefebvre 1997: 72-73).

Situationists' interventions were political acts that attempted to reveal 'the growing fragmentation of the city' as Lefebvre notes (Ross and Lefebvre 1997: 80), which had led to the loss of 'a powerful organic unity' of the city of Paris (Ross and Lefebvre 1997: 80). The ambition of SI for a unitary urbanism 'consisted of making different parts of the city communicate with one another' (Ross and Lefebvre 1997: 73). Guy Debord, one of the co-founders of the SI, whose radical ideas influenced not only the SI principles and actions, but also later European thought, was Lefebvre's student in the 1950s (Kofman and Lebas 1996: 11) and had an influential collaboration with Lefebvre which lasted until the early years of the SI group. Lefebvre was not a member of the SI group as such, however, despite differences in their critical view – for example, Lefebvre 'never shared the belief in the ability of instantaneous change brought about by spontaneous action; change in everyday life was slow' (Kofman and Lebas 1996: 18) – their critique of urban and everyday life intersect and fertilise each others' concepts.

Situationists sought through their playful, poetic interventions and their manifestos to resist to the new kind of urbanism that had appeared and to a society in which consumption and alienation were evident. A leading method that the SI employed in order to contest the conventional geographies of city-spaces and city's function was the *dérive*. The dérive, which in literal terms means 'drifting', was a way to experience the city otherwise.[63] Through the course of a dérive the walker was aware of the psychic impact of the structural elements of the city on the undertaken journey. In Debord's words it was 'a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances' (Knabb 1981: 50), which allowed 'the drawing up of the first surveys of the psychogeographical articulations of a modern city' (Knabb 1981: 53). For the SI psychogeography was a means to study the urban surroundings, to examine the way that the city influences human feelings and actions and to reveal the causes of

[63] The dérive, in which more than one person can take part, could last few hours or a day, three or four days, whilst there was one case that it lasted two months (Knabb: 51-52). Although the main method of wandering in the city is on foot, a particular dérive might include an automobile, a taxi. Through the course of a dérive the urban walker absorbed the variety of atmospheres, created by material components and regulations of the city streets.

particular spatial practices (see Knabb 1981).[64] The practice of individuals taking part in a dérive entailed choices depended on the built environment, and this selection process presents some similarities with de Certeau's analysis on how the walker confirms or negates the city-spaces. In his 'Theory of the Dérive' in 1956 Debord says:

> The element of chance is less determinant than one might think: from the dérive point of view cities have a psychogeographical relief, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes which strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones. (Knabb 1981: 50)

The dérive is a successor to *flânerie,* the practice of the *flâneur*, a figure – predominantly male – that wanders in the streets of Paris. The *flâneur* was introduced in Charles Baudelaire's writing in 19th century (see Tester 1994) and developed by Walter Benjamin's writing and specifically in his renowned and unfinished study of modern Paris *The Arcades Project* (Benjamin 1999). Baudelaire's *flâneur* observes the emerging consumerism as he (as is often a male) strolls through the city, and he is exposed to the strangeness and unfamiliarity of modern city (see Lechte 1995). The *flâneur* and the practice of dérive present similarities as they both necessitate the practice of walking through the city; however, they remain two distinctive concepts, since their meaning depends on the ways the walk is realised and the relationship of the walker with the urban space.[65]

The political and social dimensions were evident in the SI radical practices which aimed to transform the urban space and 'to reinstate lived experience as the true map of the city' (Hussey 2002: 218); to discover and define the meaning of the city's labyrinth; to reveal 'the collision between poetry and its opposite' (Hussey 2002: 219). The SI concepts and practices have had a particular influence on performance concepts and performative interventions that have sought to contest urban practices, public space, spectacle and consumerism (see Harvie 2009b: 56-66). Skateboarding is one of the performative practices, which for Borden presents similarities with the tactic of the dérive and composes psychogeographical maps 'composed from the opportunities

[64] SI produced a series of psychogeographical maps (see Sadler 1998) that challenged conventions of representing space, so to unveil 'possibilities of "subverting cartography" as a means of political resistance' (Pinder 2003: 173).

[65] The dérive is accompanied by the immersion and at the same time resistance to urban practices. As Hussey puts it 'the *flâneur* is a subject who remains at a fixed distance from the pleasures he (and it is always he) observes or consumes', whilst, the dérive 'is characterised by an active hostility to the representation of urban experience' and it proposes 'a negation of the city as a site which invites the subject to remain detached from the object at gaze' (2002: 218, italics original).

offered by the physical and emotional contours of the city, and, above all, enacted through a run across different spaces and moments' (2004: 294-5). Likewise, in the case of audio-walks the audience creates their own imaginative map of the city through their experience; they discover hidden stories of the city and its poetry, and reunite its fragmented pieces. Performative walks entail a mode of resistance to the dominant uses of streets and the representational practices of the city, by confronting the city's complexity and anonymity. They suggest an alternative architectural composition of the city.

In the course of *Wapping:audio* the walker selects, adopts and discards, confirming de Certeau's claims. The city-space becomes a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle the various pieces of which are fitted together through walking. The walker produces her/his own architecture combining what is there, in the material space, the narration and her/his own interest and imagination. Since the components of the city-spaces are complex and countless, and often fragmented, the city's jigsaw cannot be easily resolved and interpreted. Though this might seem frustrating, on the one hand, on the other hand it is this that allows space to be open and intertwined with the process of de-composing and re-composing by the walker. In her/his temporal activity of walking, the walker does not build concrete spatial elements, but she/he suggests ways of thinking about city-spaces and imagine them through experience. Adopting improvisational movements, the walker reveals alternative uses of space, decodes spatial rules and suggests a reading of space that may not be intended by planners and architects.

The *Wapping:audio* walk offered me spaces for recollection, spaces for peace, but also spaces characterised by inhospitality with their locked gates, high railings, signs warning to not enter and notifying for 'anti-climb' paint. It made me create an architecture that consisted of street names, ruins, blockages and openings, bricks and leaves, cobbled paths and water, fences and stairs, street numbers and faint signposts. It was an architecture that comprised of contradictions. A well-shaped park adjacent to a seemingly untrodden piece of land (fig. 3.14, fig. 3.15). A piece of land which, overgrown with wild plants and flowers, functioned at the same time as a car park space; cars, thick weeds, fences and plants were competing in claiming the land. It was an architecture that included traces of the past, spaces in transformation through time; an architecture of transience. Disused mooring posts implanted at the edge of the streets (fig. 3.16) next to the canal; a life-buoy hung from a wall behind the railings

(fig. 3.17) among the buildings. A hidden cemetery which quite effectively pretended to be an intimate green public space, instead of a graveyard (fig. 3.18).[66] Two anchored vessels stood abandoned, looking like silent characters that had appeared on this city-stage by accident, while they belonged to another (fig. 3.19). The water from the canal, which had intruded there once, seemed trapped by the brick sidewalls (fig. 3.20). A scaffold covered the exterior of a building protecting its transformation.

It was an architecture that defied the usual order and concreteness of the spatial structures and it magnified the abandoned elements of the previous use, their possible stories and their juxtapositions. It was an architecture that looked at fragments of the past as neglected artworks that continued a subtle dialogue with the present. An architecture that accepted the 'palimpsest-like qualities of the urban' (Pinder 2001: 9); and the idea that space is written and re-written, carrying with it stories, activities and memories. An architecture that testified the indeterminacy of space and accepted its impermanency. An architecture that found itself in an ongoing transformation in time; that is made and re-made.

Walking in the streets of Wapping confirmed what Careri observes when we walk in the city: '[w]e encounter a series of interruptions and reprises, fragments of constructed city and unbuilt zones that alternate in a continuous passage from full to empty and back' (Careri 2002: 186). The otherwise ordered, tidy and quiet area of Wapping, with its uniformed houses and well-protected residential estates, became an amalgam of built pieces and imaginative stories. And as Jonathan Raban, in his *Soft City*, stresses:

> The city as we imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city one can locate on maps in statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture. (1988: 10)

Wapping:audio activated my engagement and imagination, which built, added, demolished structures in my mind, so as to access the past, understand the present and imagine the future. I suggest that, in a way, the act of imagination is an act of resistance, since it can fight against the immovable, slow-change and concreteness of built materials. Walking through the paths of Wapping, my engagement and

[66] The cemetery in Wapping complies with the rules of order and tidiness of city-spaces (inscribed gravestones are moved to the perimeter of the yard, the grass is cut and the paths well-defined), in an attempt to defy its problematic existence – given that cemeteries are connected with ideas of impurity in the modern city (Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow 1993: 109) and with conceptions about places of waste (Lynch 1981: 111) – within the city's boundaries.

imagination filled those paths with meanings, rather than consenting to their mere functionality. As Careri says, walking is 'capable of describing and modifying those metropolitan spaces that often have a nature still demanding comprehension, to be *filled with meanings* rather than designed and *filled with things*' (2002: 26, italics original). At the end of the *Wapping:audio*, the narrator left me opposite the disused Tobacco Dock and its two neglected vessels; I had to decide how to move on from the there. And then, I remember wondering how these spaces will continue their journeys through time.

Chapter 4

Dirt and Art Space: Tate Modern

4. Introduction: Dirt and Tate Modern

Tate Modern was developed out of the conversion of Giles Gilbert Scott's Bankside Power Station (fig. 4.1). The Bankside Power Station was an austere brick building full of machinery that emitted smoke into London's sky. After its closure in 1981 it stayed derelict for about thirteen years, whilst for the next five years it was no more than a construction site. It was essentially a messy and dirty site. The architectural strategy followed in the transformation of the old power station into a museum of modern art by the architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron has left almost no signs of the previous story of the building's decayed material in its interior. Whilst the value of the exterior brick fabric of the building was appreciated and has been largely preserved – with some additions to its design – the interior has been scrubbed clean and redesigned as a 'new' space. The state of decay of the interior of the derelict power station is not evident in today's Tate Modern art spaces. In this chapter, I explore the implications of the extinction of dirt from Tate Modern, and how the notion of dirt links with notions of disorder and ambivalence, but also with creativity. I argue that the architectural practice of producing a dirt-free Tate Modern did not fully explore the potential of the disused power station.

In order to examine concepts, practices and ideologies associated with dirt, how these are manifested in architectural practices – and specifically in these followed at Tate Modern – and what their effects on experiencing architecture are, I attempt to bring into a dialogue a materialist analysis and a discussion of performative aspects specifically focused on the architecture of Tate Modern. Following Harvie's argument for a materialist performative analytical strategy, through which 'a more accurate understanding of the complexity of our contemporary lived social experience' (Harvie 2009a: 205), I seek to unravel issues related to architecture, dirt and visitors' experience, so as to better articulate their multifaceted relationship and achieve a deeper understanding of their interaction. The significance of the building's materiality is also discussed through Doris Salcedo's installation *Shibboleth*, presented at Tate Modern in 2007-2008. I explore the idea of decay and ruination through

Shibboleth, since it presents a particularity of being an artwork that directly intervened in the structure of the smooth surface of the Turbine Hall's floor. *Shibboleth* cracked the floor of the Turbine Hall along its whole length, by destroying its surface and leaving its imprint after the artwork was 'removed'. I pursue a performative analysis of the artwork, whilst I also examine how it was 'framed' by the materiality and regulated codes that exist at Tate Modern as an art space.

Tate Modern is a prominent case of a disused industrial space converted into a museum that follows the trend that emerged at the second half of the last century, in which industrial spaces have been either used as temporary exhibition spaces or permanently converted into art galleries. Tate Modern's examination contributes to a wider discussion about the practices followed in the conversion of derelict spaces and highlights the importance of this discussion for our time. As the architect Herzog says, '[f]or me it's very interesting to deal with an existing structure because in the future we will have to deal with existing structures in Europe. You cannot always start from scratch'. And he responds to those who criticised the decision of converting the old power station instead of building a new building in its place, that 'this museum is a very contemporary concept because it uses old structure [sic]' (Herzog et al. 2004: 48). Furthermore, as Tate's director Nicholas Serota asserts, the cost of the building's conversion (approximately £130 million) was almost 'two-thirds of the cost of a new building' (Herzog et al. 2004: 48).

Since its opening in 2000, Tate Modern has proved a highly popular destination not only for art lovers but also for passers-by; not only for Londoners but also for people internationally. The popularity of Tate Modern was evident even in the first year of its opening, where instead of two million visitors expected, the museum accepted 5.2 million visitors (Smith 2005: 17).[67] Certainly, its architectural characteristics and its dramatic location play a significant part in Tate Modern's success,[68] apart from the artworks exhibited.[69] Tate Modern's popularity and its

[67] The first five years of Tate Modern the total number of visitors was almost 21.5 million people, making Tate Modern 'the most popular museum of modern art in the world' (Gayford et al. 2005: 41). According to the statistics presented in *Tate Modern: The First Five Years* for the year 2004/5 Tate Modern accepted more than 4 million visitors, whereas Pompidou Centre had almost 2.6 million, MoMa between November 2004 and March 2005 had 1 million and Guggenheim Museums less than 1 million (Gayford et al. 2005: 42).

[68] As is stated in *Tate Modern: The First Five Years*: '12% of visitors said that the building itself was their principal reason for coming to the gallery' (Gayford et al. 2005: 41). Tate Modern seems to be particularly popular with young people: '60% of visitors to Tate Modern were under 35 years of age' (Gayford et al. 2005: 41) in 2004. According to Museums, Libraries and Archives Council data, 'the

national and international recognition make the impact of its architectural conversion even greater, since the result of the architectural practices pursued and realised are experienced by a large number of visitors, and possibly influence further architectural strategies.[70] The architectural principles of the Tate Modern's building may offer direction to other industrial spaces that are being considered for conversion into art spaces, or to Tate Modern's expansion towards the south, which has already been initiated (fig. 4.2, fig. 4.3). Although the expansion of Tate Modern includes a new multi-levelled brick space adjacent to the old building (fig. 4.4), at the foundations of the new construction the old oil tanks of the power station are situated. Accordingly there are two issues here: how the new building will preserve some architectural characteristics of the current building and how the architects will deal with the thirty year old disused chambers.

The architectural critic, Rowan Moore, states: '[a]rchitecture, fixed and permanent though it may seem, is always in motion, and few buildings demonstrate this better than Tate Modern' (2005: 32); but to what extent has the Tate Modern's building achieved this? The conversion of the old power station has extensively followed architectural practices that attempt to overshadow the 'motion' of the building; by this I mean the traces of time and use that had re-shaped the building, re-designed it, which in a way created a new architecture. The architectural strategy followed at Tate Modern's conversion verifies the prevailing notions of dirt. As I discuss in this chapter, dirt – marks of decay or leftover materials and objects – is often considered deterioration, it violates architectural order, it shadows clarity, it signifies imperfection and confusion (see, for example, Le Corbusier 1987, Tschumi 1996, Forty 2005, and Crisman 2007). Dirt functions as a means of distinguishing the desirable from the unwanted, the valuable from the worthless, the useful from the useless, order from chaos. It is a reminder of decay and ephemerality; it creates tension between old and new, clarity and confusion, rationality and ambiguity. The architectural approach of Tate Modern moved away from the ambivalence that dirt

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profile of Tate Modern visitors is considerably younger than the profile of museums and gallery visitors in Great Britain generally' (Gayford et al. 2005: 41).

[69] It is worth noting that as Serota explains, although the Tate Modern Collection has become bigger during the ten years of Tate Modern's function, 'the collection has fewer recognized masterpieces than the museums in Paris or New York' (Serota 2010: 12).

[70] Tate Modern has received a Civic Trust Award for its architectural and environmental design in 2002; Prime Minister's Award for Better Public Building in 2001; and it was nominated as the *Time Out* readers' favorite building in London in 2005. Also, the architects won the Pritzker Prize for architecture in 2001 (Gayford et al. 2005: 55).

entails. And it produced a clean, manageable, rational, ordered building that makes visitors' movement straightforward and avoids distractions.

I argue that dirt can become a source of creativity and allow for architects and users an inventive engagement with built space. The uncertainty that the notion of dirt entails can become a creative escape from patterns that cleanliness demands, and which are usually associated with means of categorising and ordering space. In the present condition the building manifests a certain degree of anxiety to create a 'new' building which, with the traditional whitewashed surfaces, attempts to achieve the desirable, but also unattainable, 'neutrality' of a gallery. It represents the face of the modern world, and modern architecture in particular, which has to comply with the rules of a hygienic environment, fighting against dirt and being obsessed with discarding anything that is unclean and threatens a sanitised and ordered environment. By removing the machinery, staircases, partition walls, by coating the walls with plaster and colour, and covering the floors with wood and concrete, Tate Modern attempted to restore the order of the building, something that implies taking control over space. If we seek an architecture that does not only search for creating durable and spectacular structures – which often leave almost no space for improvisation and impermanent architectural qualities – but an architecture that enhances people's engagement and contributes to cultural practices that are 'produced by us in any kind of subjective action' (Harvie 2009a: 204), then we should re-think the prevailing practices of architecture and their attitude towards what we call dirtiness.

To the question of why it is important not to keep the signs of dereliction or dirt hidden, I could respond by asking another question: why has it been an imperative to produce a clean and spotless gallery within a highly ordered and controllable environment? If the dirt, ruination, decay and disorderliness of the formerly redundant power station had been explored to a greater degree before they were discarded and cleaned, then the Tate Modern's building would have increased its potential for new juxtapositions between materials, for improvisatory spaces around the building, for unexpected narratives between artworks and space. It would have possibly supported a creative debate of how the meaning of art, as well as that of art space, is altered by the presentation of different artworks in the building. Through the interaction of artwork and building, contradictions, tensions, juxtapositions and accidental meanings would have emerged.

As I discuss in a following section, Tate Modern hangs its Collection in a non-conventional non-chronological display and this has offered a new way of interpreting and experiencing art. The visitors are invited to discover the artworks and the links between the artworks through their own imagination, experience and understanding. I suggest that if a similar experimental approach had pursued for the building itself, the building would have enhanced plurality and unforeseen associations. The visitors would experience, apart from the artwork, the leaps of time and its effects on the fabric of the building. The patina of the space in combination with the artwork, and the juxtaposition of diverse textures of the building's materials and the artwork, could have produced a space open to imagination and creativity for both artists and visitors. The creative exploration of dirt would have created a complex composition within the art space that would have asked for an individual interpretation and selection of focus, which could have shifted from the artwork to the building, and from the building to the artwork.

The discussion of this chapter will be framed by the following questions: what were the architectural practices that were implemented throughout the conversion of the disused power station into Tate Modern museum? How has the prevailing understanding of dirt influenced the architectural approach followed at Tate Modern's transformation? In what ways do the architectural choices reflect or reproduce concepts about dirtiness? With what effect? To what extent does the converted building allow visitors' interpretation as concerns the building's story and provoke a productive juxtaposition of its architectural elements? How does the antithesis of the exterior shell with the interior spaces affect the experience of the building? Lefebvre asserts that '[t]he diversion and reappropriation of space are of great significance, for they teach us much about the production of new spaces' (1991: 167); in the case of the Bankside Power Station's conversion into Tate Modern museum of modern art, what kind of new space has been produced? What concepts and ideological meanings does the new order and function of space communicate?

The interrogation of the architectural choices in relation to dirt, how these are interpreted, and the implications of these in the current use of Tate Modern's building and visitors' experience gain a particular significance with the prospect of Tate Modern's expansion. As I have already mentioned, at present, and after Tate Modern's

tenth anniversary, the extension of the building towards the south is underway.[71] The new building will provide a substantial amount of additional square metre floor space for Tate Modern's art Collection and gathering spaces. The new added polygonal volume will affect considerably the symmetry of the building, and at the same time it will give to visitors the chance to experience the oil tanks in the foundations of the building. Will these subterranean cylindrical spaces preserve any of their oxidised surfaces or their timeworn material that manifest the previous use and the passage of time? Or will the history of their fabric remain hidden and buried under polished surfaces? Possibly the analysis presented in this chapter gives an insight to why the patina of these spaces should be worthy of being preserved and being incorporated into the architectural design.

4.1 The chosen Bankside Power Station and the foundation of Tate Modern

In the late 1980s, after the realisation that the exhibition and storage space of the Tate Gallery at Millbank were not sufficient for the gallery's 'rapidly growing collection' (*Burlington Magazine* 2000: 479) the trustees and the director Nicholas Serota, appointed in 1988, concluded that a new building was a necessity. Since they had discarded the earlier plan of the early 1980s concerning the expansion of the Millbank site (see Craig-Martin 2000) they started looking for the new site which part of Tate Gallery would move to and which would give to Britain 'a hugely improved international profile in the housing and showing of modern and contemporary art' (*Burlington Magazine* 2000: 479). The division of the Tate Gallery into two separate galleries was followed by the division of the collections they should host; Tate Gallery at Millbank would host British art from the sixteenth century to the present and be renamed as Tate Britain, whilst the new Tate would be dedicated to international modern art from 1900 onwards (*Burlington Magazine* 2000: 479).

The practical demands of the new space were straightforward: 'a large-scale central location, ready accessibility by public transport (particularly the tube), within reasonably easy reach of Millbank, and available for development in the near future' (Craig-Martin 2000: 13). The sites considered did not satisfy the requirements set by the trustees and the director of Tate until the Bankside Power Station in Southwark came into view. Despite the fact that the Bankside site was not what the trustees and

[71] Tate Modern's establisment as a cultural landmark and its anticipated expansion had an impact on the adjusent area towards the south, where luxury residential builidngs have been constructed (fig. 4.5).

director envisaged for the new Tate in the first place, since its size exceeded what they expected and it was by no means a new building, the building was chosen to be the new Tate gallery. The Artist Trustee of the Tate Gallery at the time, Michael Craig-Martin says: '[t]he discovery of Bankside dramatically altered our perception of the possible appearance, scale and function of the new gallery' (2000: 14). The available site of Bankside was chosen since it fulfilled the initial requirements of a 'large-scale central location'; it was accessible by public transport, especially after the opening of Southwark tube station; and it could provide 'easy reach of Millbank', specifically in the prospect of connecting the two galleries with a riverboat.

The Bankside Power Station remained disused and inaccessible for more than 13 years; its closure in October 1981 was due to the demand on fuel which was considered uneconomical compared, for example, to nuclear stations (Stamp 2004: 188). The vast dimensions of its brick exterior and the particularity of its position within the city made the power station a distinctive urban figure in London's landscape. However, its gigantic scale and its prominent location did not save it from ruination; after its abandonment – and having failed to be listed (Stamp 2004: 190) – 'the building had become a brooding presence and a blight on the redevelopment of the surrounding area' (Craig-Martin 2000: 14). What was once a 'cathedral of power' (Stamp 2004: 182), turned out to be a scar in the cityscape, which spread anxieties with its gloomy presence.

The Bankside Power Station was constructed in two stages between 1947 and 1963; the first phase was completed in 1953 and started providing the city of London with electricity, and in 1963 the entire building was finished (Sabbagh 2001: 10). It was designed by the distinguished architect Giles Gilbert Scott, who was also the architect of the Battersea Power Station, as well as of the typical red telephone box, and of a number of libraries and churches, among them the large-scale project of the Anglican cathedral in Liverpool – his first and possibly most ambitious building. Scott's speciality in designing enormous buildings had also influenced his concept and creation of the Bankside Power Station. The giant dimensions – the tall towers, the narrow windows, the brick walls – were a repetitive motif in his work, giving his buildings a monumental aspect. Scott's design, following the requirements for the power station, and apparently influenced by the work of the architect Willem Marinus Dudok (Stamp 2004: 185), produced a vast building of almost 4 million bricks, the

distinctive feature of which, the central square chimney, emphasised the symmetry of its horizontal volume.

The location of the Bankside Power Station held great significance, since the building was constructed in precise alignment with St Paul's cathedral, standing on the opposite side of the river. The 93-metre-long chimney, intentionally shorter than the height of the cathedral (fig. 4.6),[72] acted as the dome of the 'industrial cathedral', and made explicit the direct architectural dialogue between the two buildings; St Paul's cathedral on the north side of the river and Bankside Power Station on the south. Since St Paul's cathedral, built by Christopher Wren in the 17th century, was considered a masterpiece and a significant landmark of London, its encounter with the immense industrial building was not easy to dismiss: '[i]t was a remarkable confrontation, the greatest civic landmark that London has ever built directly opposite a giant industrial object, the kind of installation normally kept out of sight in city centers' (Sudjic 2001: 184).

On the exterior of the vast red brick building, the windows alongside the detailed ending of the brickwork mainly constitute the decoration of the building. Scott placed a series of relatively narrow, but considerably long windows, which stretched almost from bottom to top of the structure (fig. 4.7). The interior was steel-framed and divided throughout its length by a series of steel pillars into two large-scale halls; the first, closer to the river, hosted the boiler house, and the other sheltered the turbine hall, where four large turbines were operating generating electricity (Sudjic 2001: 184, 186). Michael Craig-Martin, who was stunned by looking at the disused interior on his visit to the Bankside Power Station, describes: '[t]here were no normal floors, no staircases, no interior walls: everything inside had been built as part of the machinery, not part of the building' (2000: 15). The interior did not comply with a tidy and comprehensible layout, divided by walls and floors, doors and corridors, but it functioned as a gigantic machine, occupied by cylinders, pistons, pumps, metallic secondary equipment, screw bolts, ladders, which followed their own order and system of organisation. The arrangement and operation of the machinery dictated the layout of the building's immense interior.

[72] The chimney was finished lower than the cathedral's dome, in an attempt to pay respect to St. Paul's cathedral and to not take the dome's priority in the skyline of the city. However, this decreased the chimney's efficiency and as a result the released smoke of the power station harmed the exterior of St Paul's cathedral (see Stamp 2004).

When the engines stopped producing electricity for the city and the site passed into dereliction, the dirty and noisy industrial space became a silent and formidable figure in the cityscape, which, although it continued housing an electricity switch station, was considered useless and inactive. The Tate Board's decision to use the site for Tate's new museum of modern art reintroduced the site to the cityscape. Once the site was reclaimed, it became visible, less threatening, changing the public attitude towards the building, resulting to be considered as a 'piece of heritage': 'once seen as a utilitarian intrusion in the center of some of London's most historic views but now regarded as an essential piece of heritage' (Lampugnani and Sachs 2001: 184). The site was sold to the Tate in 1994, and it started becoming active and accepting human presence in 1995, when reconstruction work started.

There were a range of reactions that opposed the prospect of converting the power station into the Tate's new museum for contemporary art. For critics this was 'an example of England's backward-looking obsession with preservation, whereby an industrial relic, that was not even a listed building, would be retained' (Moore 2005: 29). The decision to purchase and convert the existing site as well as the reactions that would likely follow created anxiety for some members within the Tate Board. Sandy Nairne, Tate's director of Regional and Public Services, in 1994 said:

> Everybody's instincts originally were for building a new building. It seems to make sense – if you want to build a museum of modern art, you want a new building. And of course there was the worry that if you didn't build a new building everybody would say, "Oh, come on, it's never going to be as good". (Sabbagh 2001: 6)

Indeed, there were negative reactions from architects that saw this decision as a missed opportunity. The renowned British architect Will Alsop, for example, who has adopted a quite controversial style in his architectural design, declares his objections to the interior layout of the Tate Modern's building which, according to him, overtly controls the way of moving and experiencing the building: 'when I go around it, I feel that I'm being guided in the same way that I might be guided round a shopping centre. I'm being manipulated' (Brockes www). But most importantly he rejects the whole idea of converting the old building and not building a new one; 'they should have pulled the existing building down' (Brockes www), he claims. For Alsop, the Tate Modern project was a missed opportunity for contemporary London. He believes that the main reason for not constructing a new structure was the financial reality of it:

> Therefore I think London missed out on getting something very new. Behind that I suspect that there was a notion that it would be less expensive to convert an existing building than to build a new one. Serota and co had to find the money, had to make their business case. I always wonder about the business case for art; it's not a business, it's sheer joy and delight. (Brockes www)

Indeed, in order to pull the existing building down and build an entirely new one in the same scale would have not been possible, since this would have exceeded the available budget (see Sabbagh 2001: 7). The immense dimensions of the building as well as the financial restrictions have saved the building from demolition, giving the chance to the old power station to speak its own language within the architecture of London. But did actually the old power station achieve this fully?

4.1.2 Converting the Power Station: The extinction of dirt

The practice of converting a building to a museum 'has been the rule rather than the exception in museum development' (von Moos 2001: 20) as the architectural critic Stanislaus von Moos observes.[73] Museums have been born by the conversion of a range of buildings, from palaces such as the Louvre and Uffizi to railway stations such as the Gare d'Orsay (von Moos 2001: 20). Towards the end of the last century industrial buildings came into play and offered their spaces for museum purposes; thus, the Saatchi Gallery, which used to be an old paint factory, appeared in Chelsea in London, and in the Liverpool Docks, the Tate Liverpool found a home.[74] Within the industrial buildings that have been converted to museums at the end of the last century and beginning of the 21st century, Tate Modern holds a privileged position: '[i]t is the latest and most spectacular example of the late-century re-use of obsolete industrial buildings as museums or galleries' (*Burlington Magazine* 2000: 479). Thus, the examination of the impact of the building attains a particular significance. The strategy that followed in the conversion of the old building becomes a central issue not only in investigating the degree to which the building accomplished its potential as a former industrial building, but also to evaluate the prospect of its expansion. The examination of the architectural approach for Tate Modern's conversion can also offer us an insight into practices of conversion in general.

[73] For the tendency of converting industrial spaces into spaces for inhabitation, started in the 1970s in the USA, the role of art spaces, and the change of the commercial and market value of converted spaces, see Sharon Zukin's *Loft Living* (1989).
[74] For a discussion about all four Tate Galleries in Britain see Helen Searing's *Art Spaces* (2004).

When the building of the Bankside Power Station was proposed to be considered for the new Tate, the director of Tate Nicholas Serota was intrigued by the fact that the building, which belonged to the previous century, would exhibit artwork of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He believed that the juxtaposition of the building's age and the contemporary work displayed would make visitors aware of practices and relationships between past and present:

> It will be extremely interesting to bring together a mid twentieth-century vision and a late twentieth-vision. That collision in itself, that juxtaposition, is actually very characteristic of the time in which we live. I think that old buildings of this sort can provide rather wonderful spaces in which to show twentieth-century art. This discontinuity, this collision between different visions or different moments, is a very powerful one. Secondly, a building that has a certain patina and a certain age is also one in which the immediate contemporary can often be seen in better relief than in an absolutely new building. It's very striking if you go to Italy, for instance, and see contemporary art installed in a Renaissance palace: it's not only that a tension exists between the art and its setting but also that you are made very conscious of the sense of living at a particular moment, of the art being made at a particular moment, and necessarily the kind of relationships that exist between it and art in the past. (Sabbagh 2001: 8)

However, after the conversion of the power station almost no traces from the past can be found within the building. Although the dark surface of the brick exterior witnesses the age of the building and signifies its past use, aging marks cannot actually be found in its interior. The changes provoked through the years of dereliction, every sign of dirt, disintegration and stains from its past use have been extinguished. The only signs in the interior of the previous use, structure and function are the dimensions of the Turbine Hall, its steel supports and the gantry crane that goes almost unobservable at the ceiling (fig. 4.8). Tate Modern, aiming to declare itself as a 'new' space, had to extinguish signs of dirt and refused to incorporate into its design marks that would have created a stimulating tension between the building, the artworks and the visitors. The story of the disused Bankside Power Station has been rendered unreadable, since all the surfaces of the interior have been scrubbed clean, the machinery has been removed and the galleries' walls follow the tradition of the whitewashed art spaces.

In her article 'From Industry to Culture' (2007), Phoebe Crisman, a practicing architect, compares the level of transformation of four industrial buildings that have been converted to art museums, and investigates 'how specific architectural strategies can provoke an open reception and interpretation of the past, present and future'

(2007: 406). The four museums for contemporary art that Crisman puts under examination opened between 1997 and 2003 and they were built between 1860 and 1947. Although their conversion has helped them to become 'a vital part of the present' (2007: 418), they are leftovers of past industrial production. All of them are widely known within the city they are situated but also internationally, and as Crisman claims they 'serve as cultural metaphors' (2007: 418), since 'each one tells a story of a shift from industrial to cultural production' (2007: 418). Their industrial past and their conversion to art spaces may be the common storyline of these buildings, but the version of their story varies significantly and as a consequence the impact of their conversion.

The four museums that Crisman examines are Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA – industrial complex at Arnold Print Works, North Adams, Massachusetts), Design Zentrum (boiler house of the complex Zollverein XII Coal Mine, Essen, Germany), Dia:Beacon (former factory, Beacon, New York) and Tate Modern. By following diverse architectural strategies in the conversion of these museums, the art spaces created vary the kind of experience they deliver to the visitors. Apart from this fact, they also make evident the prevailing architectural views towards dirt and decay. The architectural strategy pursued in each museum, as Crisman states, 'manifest different attitudes toward accumulated industrial dirt and leftover materials' (2007: 418). The architectural intervention is extensive in the Dia:Beacon and Tate Modern and less in MASS MoCA and the Design Zentrum. Whilst in the two last mentioned museums the 'design approach aligns with a strong appreciation of their industrial and social history' (2007: 418), in the two first mentioned museums 'sanitised surfaces […] demonstrate less concern for what has gone before and more for a globalised and pristine present' (2007: 418). Crisman argues that:

> In the case of leftover and reconfigured industrial architecture, openness to material transformation, palimpsest and even dirtiness is an effective means of allowing the past to remain visible and provocative, while positioning cultural institutions in the present as part of ongoing and open processes of imagination, interpretation and accretion in time, with no end in sight. (2007: 418-419)

Although the idea of preserving and recycling the existing buildings gains ground, 'we are rarely willing to forgo the increasingly high expectations of cleanliness and comfort fundamental to contemporary western culture' (2007: 405),

Crisman says. It is evident in her examples, and most importantly in the case of Tate Modern, that converted industrial buildings often deny their dirty and decaying character and declare themselves as 'new' spaces after they have undergone transfiguration. The tendency of suspending dirt is related to the prevailing 'attraction to the "new," and to the predictable spaces of global commodity culture', which according to Crisman, 'frequently outweigh the desire to experience old materials and the peculiarities of lived-in spaces intended for earlier functions' (2007: 405). The greater the transformation, the more convincing is the declaration of 'new' space. The eradication of 'the stigmas of former economic or social disenfranchisement and neglect' (2007: 405) related with industrial buildings is considered to play a significant role in urban revitalization. Certainly, an important issue is that disused industrial buildings have become symbols of economic and social decline. Their physical decay functions as a reminder of the challenges followed deindustrialization, and it may evoke feelings of anxiety and insecurity.

However, a design strategy that incorporates signs of dirt and decay into the transformation of an industrial building, especially when this is going to function as a museum, can 'create a lens that magnifies our awareness of historical change' and, thus, it can expose 'the ideologies of progress embodied in buildings designed for optimal commodity production' (2007: 406), as Crisman claims. A museum that does not conceal its industrial past and its former decay can act as an artwork in itself that asks us for our interpretation. It poses questions about space and time, about social and spatial processes that take place in time. It questions our place in relation to time and space, as Crisman says: '[w]hen museum visitors encounter architectural palimpsest, imperfection and even dirtiness, they are then compelled to question their place in time' (2007: 406).

4.2 The fissure of the Turbine Hall: Doris Salcedo's *Shibboleth*

It still makes me wonder how an artwork such as *Shibboleth* had been approved to be the next large-scale project presented at the Turbine Hall in October 2007 and it seems to me unlikely that an artwork with similar demands will hereafter appear in the space of Tate Modern. Possibly the industrial character of the Turbine Hall and its, in a sense, imperfection advocated the acceptance of this artwork. Given that the piece would not be 'placed' *within* the space or *upon* its surfaces, but the artist would 'sculpt' the building's actual material meant that the smooth concrete ramp and

the whole length of the Turbine Hall's floor would be permanently injured. The scar that the artwork left on the concrete floor is still evident in the Turbine Hall.

Shibboleth was conceived by the Colombian artist Doris Salcedo, and it was created along with the support of a team of architects, technicians, engineers and workers, as well as construction companies (see Todolí 2007). Salcedo opened a chasm along the Turbine Hall, starting at the entrance of the museum with an almost unobservable crack, which became deeper and wider along the route, and disappeared under the wall at the eastern side of the space. The two sides of the snaky crack held apart with an inserted fence. The ending of the fissure as well as its depth seemed indefinable. Exceeding the physical boundaries of the building appeared to spread out to the city, provoking questions about the literal and metaphorical foundations and stability of the Tate Modern's art space as well as its connection with the city.

The meaning of an artwork can be explored through a wide range of approaches and is produced within a number of contexts; I am interested in investigating the meaning produced by *Shibboleth* in relation to the context of space that it was exhibited. Therefore, I discuss aspects of how *Shibboleth* generated meaning through its physical manifestation within the art space of Tate Modern, and how in a performative way the concept of *Shibboleth* makes us cross boundaries. The effectiveness of the artwork lies in the fact that it brings into a dialogue two ideas that seem to contrast with each other in Tate Modern: those of the idealised gallery spaces and the materiality of space as an industrial building. Situated within the epicentre of modern culture in London, *Shibboleth* disrupted the art space of Tate Modern and questioned the well-established international institutional settings; given that the landmark of Tate Modern represents not only the cultural power of London, but also this of western culture. The long fissure that took over the Turbine Hall, on the one hand, provided a critical perspective to the processes, practices and ideologies that have produced Tate Modern gallery, and on the other hand asked for a creative interrogation of space through destruction and disruption.

I consider three significant aspects of *Shibboleth*: first, its spatial manifestation and strong physical connection with the Tate Modern space. The artwork was physically inseparable from the building and specifically the Turbine Hall where it was created; it could not be moved or reproduced to another space, since it was not added or placed in the space, but it was created by the removal of the Turbine Hall's floor material. The indivisible character of the artwork from the art space assigned

'site-specificity' to artwork, making the interrogation of the artwork strongly connected with the existing institutional conventions of Tate Modern. Miwon Kwon defines specificity within an art space in relation to the practices and ideologies governing such a space, but also in relation to the wider context of social, economic and political forces:

> To be "specific" to such a site, in turn, is to decode and/or recode the institutional conventions so as to expose their hidden operations – to reveal the ways in which institutions mold art's meaning to modulate its cultural and economic value; to undercut the fallacy of art's and institution's autonomy by making apparent their relationship to the broader socioeconomic and political processes of the day. (2004: 14)

The second point I want to make in relation to *Shibboleth* is the critique the artwork made in relation to prevailing notions of the Tate Modern spaces, specifically in relation to the public character of the Turbine Hall and the idealised gallery spaces. *Shibboleth* intervened in the most distinctive, admired, praised and visited public space of the building, whilst it manifested the division of the Turbine Hall from the function of the north side of the building. Salcedo's work challenged the outcome of the architectural principles and decisions taken through Tate Modern's conversion. It brought forward the formerly derelict character of the building and reminded us that the 'new' building has been raised through the ruins of the old power station. And the third aspect that I want to point out is the creative possibilities the concept of *Shibboleth* opened in not only experiencing art, but also in the process of thinking, constructing and experiencing former industrial spaces.

The investigation of *Shibboleth* has been framed by the following questions: How did the artwork challenge Tate Modern's architecture and function? What meanings did the 'ruination' of the Turbine Hall produce, particularly in connection to the building's previous state of decay? How did *Shibboleth* transform the public space of the Turbine Hall? In what ways did *Shibboleth* highlight the processes that take place in Tate Modern and which condition people's visit? What has been rejected? In what ways was the artwork 'framed' within the Tate Modern? Did the appearance of the artwork in Tate Modern enhance or diminish the impact of the piece?

Shibboleth was part of *The Unilever Series*, which annually commission artists to present an artwork in response to the cavernous space of the Turbine Hall. Among works that have been presented since this scheme initiated in 2000 are these of Louis Bourgeois's *Maman*, a gigantic bronze spider and *I Do, I Undo and I Redo*, three steel

towers embraced with spiral staircases (2000), Juan Muñoz, *Double Bind*, a floor pierced with a series of shafts, which divided the Turbine Hall into two parts (2001), Anish Kapoor's *Marsyas*, a massive sculpture resembled a flower or trumpet that stretched through the whole space (2002), Olafur Eliasson's *The Weather Project*, a spectacular gigantic sun composed of light (2003), Bruce Nauman's *New Materials,* a sound installation across the length of the hall (2004), Rachel Whiteread's *EMBANKMENT*, an installation comprised of thousands of white boxes (2005), and Miroslaw Balka's *How It Is*, a box containing 'darkness' (2009).

Shibboleth stands as a distinctive art piece which comes into a sharp contrast with the joyful slides by Carsten Höller (*Test Site* 2006), presented just before *Shibboleth* installed in the Turbine Hall, but also with the artworks that have been presented at Tate Modern in general, since it did not fill in the space but it was created by actually removing its material. Casten Höller's popular *Test Site*, a set of five cylinder slides installed in different heights, had transformed the Turbine Hall into an indoor playground for children and adults – who could not do otherwise but express their excitement with cheerful voices as they moved down the slides, something that also affected the enjoyment of those watching. Unlike the vertical slides *Shibboleth* exploited the horizontality of the building and resisted offering a similarly thrilling adventure to the visitors as the one caused by such velocity. *Shibboleth* asked for an attentive walk down the route it inscribed on the floor and it was characterised by a lack of spectacle, contrasting, for example, with Eliasson's illusionary landscape. It transformed the floor into a dangerous, unstable and unwelcome surface, unlike Eliasson's *Weather Project*, where the floor supported people's prone bodies and complemented their contemplation of the 'sun' by looking up at the ceiling absorbing its light (see Harvie 2009a: 213-4). The floor became the focus of the visitors' gaze, and its literal opening gathered the visitors along its route asking for a dialogue with the basement of the building and not its awe-inspiring height.

The artworks appointed by *The Unilever Series* specifically for the Turbine Hall have broadened the variety of artworks presented in a gallery, whist they vividly exemplify how the art space actively influences and inspires the concept and creation of the artwork. It is characteristic that art critic Martin Gayford refers to two artworks displayed at the Turbine Hall to justify the achievements of Tate Modern: '[a]nd it's not the least achievement of Tate Modern that artists such as Eliasson and Kapoor have made notable works that respond to its unusual demands. That is, it has begun

not only to display art but also to affect it' (2005: 12). The unique dimensions of the Turbine Hall have contributed to the process of generating distinctive art pieces; thus, the idea of the museum as a receptacle, a space that silently accepts pieces of art is contested. Possibly, in a similar way, if the building had preserved more aspects of its previous dirt, then we could have experienced some artworks stimulated by it (either complying with dirtiness or working against it); and the artworks exhibited would have attained another meaning, because the museum would offer an unconventional experience for the audience.

Certainly, the particularity of the Turbine Hall and its vast scale has been a challenge for curators and artists, since the space can potentially absorb the artwork and reduce its impact. Artists confronted the challenge of the immense dimensions of the space in September 1996 for the first time. Before the removal of the power station plants, a small group of 20 artists and journalists was taken on a guided tour by Sandy Nairne, the Tate's director of Regional and Public Services. Their astonishment was followed by a range of reactions. The artist, Julia Wood, articulated the need for large-scale artworks in order to satisfy the demands of the Turbine Hall: '[w]ith modern architecture we're getting used to art being large scale. When you're actually walking through it and upstairs, you realise someone's going to have to get going making some really big sculpture' (Sabbagh 2001: 94). The painter, Albert Irvin, expressed his anxieties about the scale of his artwork and the scale of artwork that the space would ask: 'God only knows how they'll use this space […] I'm an old man […] I go on doing my paintings and hope they'll find somewhere to hang them' (Sabbagh 2001: 95). The vast space called artists to rethink their work in relation to the space it would be exhibited. Certainly, one of the pieces that has firmly taken into the account the scale as well as the significance of what the Turbine Hall represents was Salcedo's *Shibboleth*.

4.2.1 Salcedo's work

Salcedo does not ignore the spatial, cultural, social effect and context of her artwork; on the contrary her artwork is strongly associated with them. From the early stages of her career – having also had a brief involvement with the Colombian theatre designing theatre sets – she aimed to bring art and politics together (Basualdo 2000: 8). Influenced by Josef Beuys, she sought the engagement of sculpture with the social sphere and incorporated her political thinking into her work. Her work is a process of

discovery of 'how materials have the capacity to convey specific meanings' (Basualdo 2000: 10). She was born and studied in Bogotá in Colombia, and apart from a short period of three years when she went to New York for further studies in Fine Art and then travelled in Europe, she has been living and working in her native country. However, her work is occupied by issues concerning migration and displacement: 'What does it mean to be a foreigner? What does it mean to be displaced?' she asks (Basualdo 2000: 9). Coming back to Bogotá she 'continued to live like an outsider', since this gave her 'the distance one needs to be critical of the society to which one belongs' (Basualdo 2000: 9), as she says.

Living in a place of conflict such as Colombia, Salcedo's work has been greatly influenced by human violation and loss. She undertakes detailed research and involves in her work the experience of victims and their testimonies, having often interviewed them, whilst she regularly incorporates physical evidence of victims into her artworks. Salcedo states that because 'life is constantly interrupted by acts of violence' (Basualdo 2000: 13) in Colombia, it 'imposes upon you this awareness of the other. Violence, horror, forces you to notice the Other, to see others' suffering' (Basualdo 2000: 14). Her immediate experience of people suffering, situations of violence and disruption of life she has witnessed herself becomes fundamental for her work. Salcedo's work acts as a testimony of the 'other' that remains invisible in contemporary societies. It articulates the absence of human presence with objects and installations that manifest a devastated space largely ignored within the social context. Although her work has been greatly influenced by the social and political scene of her country, it exceeds the boundaries of her country and addresses issues that concern injustice and violence across humanity. Acknowledging the 'other', Salcedo attempts to find ways to make the 'other' present through her sculptures, creating a meeting point for encountering otherness. Her work becomes 'a topography of life' (Basualdo 2000: 12), by making visible what exists in the margins and places it in the centre.

Her artworks, which have been exhibited internationally since 1998,[75] are characterised by absence, disappearance and brutality. They suggest violation of space and human body, and unequal power relations. Found objects discovered by 'rummaging through waste' (Basualdo 2000: 14) often constitute source material for her work. Domestic pieces of furniture, tables, drawers, chairs, doors, bed frames,

[75] Part of her work has been acquired by the Tate Modern Collection.

distorted, disjointed and filled with cement, embedded in each other's structure, covered with hair or relics of fabric imply a moment of violence which has resulted in the inability for further function.[76] Displaced pieces of furniture that belong to distinct areas of a house are joined together in a 'hybrid structure' that 'disturbs the function not just of individual items of furniture but of the entire taxonomy of dwelling' (Mengham 2007: 27), Rod Mengham observes. Her work challenges not only the taxonomy of the domestic space, but also 'it disrupts the temporal measures of everyday life' – since the use of objects brought together usually varies from one to the other, according to the time during the day. And given that an object of privacy becomes exposed to the public eye, her work 'recasts the mutual exclusion of private and public areas' (Mengham 2007: 27). Objects entrapped in boxes, covered with animal fibre, or captured by steel poles bare witness to those that have suffered or disappeared.

The vocabulary of her artwork has also been expanded from the dismantled and 'walled' domestic objects to the architectural qualities and dimensions of spaces. For Salcedo, there is no such thing as a neutral and depoliticised space: '[s]pace is not simply a setting, it is what makes life possible' it is through and across space that encounters become possible, 'everything happens to us in spatial terms […] there is no way of isolating living experience from spatial experience: it's exactly the same thing' (Basualdo 2000: 12). In 2002, Salcedo lowered over the façade of the Palace of Justice in Bogotá almost 300 chairs as a commemoration to those killed inside the building in 1985 (see Salcedo 2007). In 2003, more than a thousand wooden chairs were stuck together in a derelict site in the 8th international Istanbul Biennial, creating 'a topographical piece, made up of moments, fragments and relations' (Salcedo 2007: 98-99). Whilst in 2005, she created the project titled *Abyss* in Castello di Rivoli in Turin, where she built the walls of the impressive 'room 18' with bricks, blocking the doorways, and leaving unbuilt only a strip at the bottom of the wall to the floor, all around the room. The brick walls hanging from the distinctive dome of the room created 'a space that not only contain[ed] but also dominat[ed] the bodies it shelter[ed]' (Salcedo 2007: 118-119), reproducing feelings of confinement and captivity. *Shibboleth* follows Salcedo's process of creation that involves political

[76] For discussions about Salcedo's work see Jessica Bradley and Andreas Huyssen 1998; Nancy Princenthal et al. 2000; Rod Mengham 2007; and Mieke Bal 2007.

thinking, ability to communicate concepts through materiality, as well as the expansion of her artistic vocabulary.

4.2.2 The shibboleth of Tate Modern

Shibboleth was one of the most challenging pieces presented in the Turbine Hall, given that it attacked the space's structural form as well as the meanings the space generates for the public. It intruded into the space of the Turbine Hall and moved down from the ramp to the other end of the hall, dividing the whole building into two. Unwelcome to any building that seeks to be inhabitable, even more when this is a public building, the crack transformed the Tate Modern into a kind of construction site;[77] a site where the known order of the museum had been destabilised. *Shibboleth* factually shook the materiality of the Turbine Hall along with concepts and ideologies associated with the Turbine Hall as a public art space. *Shibboleth* opened 'a critical space' (Borchardt-Hume: 17) that challenged the western ideals by violating the architectural structure of the international museum, manifesting the vulnerability of the space as well as exposing concepts and practices that run through it. By inscribing a 'negative space' (Salcedo 2007: 65) on the Tate Modern's gut, Salcedo opened up a gap from where questions concerning division and exclusion, art space and sculpture were raised.

In a materialist perspective the artwork was too neat to be unsettling; no detritus remained from the 'catastrophe'. Although Salcedo declares that the subtle presence of the piece inside the space of the Turbine Hall was intentional: '[a]s you look in you can get the feeling of catastrophe in there but nonetheless outside is quite subtle' (Salcedo www), it seems that the avoidance of a greater degree of destruction in the Turbine Hall was also connected with health and safety issues. On the backside of the leaflet given to the visitors was stated: 'Warning. Please watch your step in the Turbine Hall. Please keep children under supervision'. Visitors were warned about the dangers of stepping in the space, of taking a walk in a site of destruction. As the gap

[77] *Shibboleth* reminds the work of Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-78) *Splitting* 1974, in which the artist cut the walls and floors of an abandoned building which awaited demolition. In *Splitting* the artwork comes after the space has been uninhabitable, where in *Shibboleth* the sculpture itself renders the space in a sense derelict, a space of danger that should not be inhabitable. However, both works challenge architectural and urban concepts, and they form a kind of contemporary archaeological excavation that seeks disruption of the established norms represented by buildings and search for finding new meanings. For a discussion about Matta-Clark's work in relation to architecture (he was himself a trained architect) and specifically in relation to Le Corbusier's principles (of which he was a strong opponent), see James Attlee's article: 'Towards Anarchitecture' (Tate Papers www).

became gradually wider and deeper towards the east side of the Turbine Hall, it also became more alarming and risky, challenging Tate Modern's regulations. Despite Tate Modern's staff invigilation, there were a small number (compared to the people visited the artwork) of injuries reported. And Dennis Ahern, Tate Galleries' Head of safety and security considered additional measures for assuring that visitors would not trip and fall, such as 'higher levels of control of entry, barrier or demarcation lines, perspex bridging over certain sections or other physical interventions' (Moore-Bridger www). Certainly, such interventions would have affected greatly the experience of the artwork, distancing the artwork from the physical contact with the audience.[78]

Shibboleth was a piece that asked for negotiation, a provocative artwork, which opened literally and metaphorically, the space for critical reflection and asked people to take a risk – the risk to cross borders or suspend themselves above its gap. However, in my view, even as it was displayed, *Shibboleth* included a degree of compromise, which was problematic since it framed the crack as an artwork that takes place in a 'clean' and safe art space. The crevice, even as it was presented, became a trap for few visitors; scattered debris would have possibly created a larger risk for the audience. Thus, the clean floor of the Turbine Hall had established a frame for the piece. The removal of the debris, which I could imagine was produced through the creation of the work, had possibly diminished the impact of the piece and the disorder it attempted to provoke. The piece was 'clean' and its undesirable dirt had been eradicated. Also, another factor that rendered the piece problematic, and might have distracted the audience from its meaning – if not diminished its impact – was the increased occupation of the press and visitors of how this fissure had actually been created and to what extent this had affected the stability of the building itself. An issue that had split people's opinions.[79]

The word 'shibboleth' according to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* signifies 'an old idea, principle or phrase that is no longer accepted by many people as important or appropriate to modern life', or 'a custom, word, etc. that distinguishes one group of people from another' (Wehmeier et. al. 2005: 1400). It originates '[f]rom a Hebrew word meaning "ear of corn"' and it is connected with the

[78] Something that happened in Ai Weiwei's *Sunflower Seeds* in 2010, when the visitors were banned from walking and touching the porcelain seeds, after it was identified that the colour the seeds were painted contained traces of lead (see Milmo www, and BBC News (15 October 2010) www).
[79] See, for example, Jon Henley (The Guardian www), Jon Pratty (Culture24 www), and Richard Dorment (The Telegraph www).

Bible story, in which 'Jephthah, the leader of the Gileadites, was able to use it as a test to tell which were his own men, because others found the "sh" sound difficult to pronounce' (Wehmeier et. al. 2005: 1400). Thus the pronunciation of the word 'shibboleth' would define who belonged to the Gileadites and distinguish them from the opposing group of Ephraimites, whose difficulty to articulate the 'sh' sound would end up with thousands of them to be killed. The word shibboleth acts as a way of testing boundaries, of identifying the authentic and separating it from the untruthful, of recognising membership and union and specifying differentiation and dissociation. As Martin Herbert claims '[a] shibboleth is a token of power: the power to judge, refuse and kill' (Herbert www).

The meaning of the word shibboleth and the concept of the artwork have a strong association, since for Salcedo, '*Shibboleth* is a piece that refers to dangers at crossing borders or to being rejected in the moment of crossing borders' (Salcedo www). Her work intended to represent the boundaries that separate humans and called us to confront the 'other' side and cross the division line. There is always a 'mesh keeping people out or inside as you want to see it, anyway keeping people away so it's a piece that is both in the epicentre of catastrophe and at the same time it is outside catastrophe' (Salcedo www). Salcedo is aware of the fact that the dialogue between spectator and artwork shapes the meaning of an artwork: '[o]nce the piece is finished, it becomes completely autonomous from me. It is this autonomous creation that establishes a dialogue with the spectator who is open to it' (Basualdo 2000: 17), as she has stated in 2000. However, in her proposal for the artwork *Shibboleth* as well as in her interview after the instalment of the work, Salcedo was rather explicit. *Shibboleth* was 'an attempt to orient this modernist space [Turbine Hall] towards the unbridgeable gap that separates humanity from infra-humanity' (Salcedo 2007: 65).

For Salcedo the piece was 'inopportune and – apparently – out of control' (2007: 65). It intruded into the space as an unwelcome immigrant: 'just intrudes without permission, just gets in slowly and all of a sudden it's there and it's a fairly big presence' (Salcedo www), she says. Salcedo sought her piece to become 'a question mark, a disruption' (Salcedo www) in space as well as in time. Although she considers her work as a reminder rather than an attack, the artwork's outcome had a forceful impact on the building's material and it was analogous to 'attacks' on built structures caused by physical disaster or human acts of destruction. Indeed, the artwork 'enters' the building slowly, and subtly and took over its smooth surface

reaching the other end of the Turbine Hall. Her artwork functioned as a performative interrogation of the materiality, functionality and meaning of the art space itself, that is, the museum of modern art in London.

The function of the building as a museum of modern art brings modernity into the discussion, which according to Salcedo 'is seen as an exclusively European event, in which the self-cultivation of the human mind through the exercise of reason and the study of the classics had as its main purpose the creation of a homogenous, rational and beautiful society' (2007: 65). Modern art played a role 'in the formation of the stereotype of human beauty' (Salcedo 2007: 65). *Shibboleth* was a reminder of what has been omitted from the history of modernity, or has been pushed aside by the stereotypes modernity produced and what has been restricted by the idealised order and perfection. The experience of the viewers looking down into the fissure acted as a reminder of the 'other' side. The unwelcome immigrant – especially in a European land that proclaims democratic processes and reconciliation through dialogue – the hidden side of the Europe culture and history, which triggers Salcedo's imagination and political thought was captured with her artwork, finding an appropriate context within the Tate Modern's building:

> Its occurrence seems to be the product of an irrational event crossing through a rationalist building. Its appearance disturbs the Turbine Hall in the same way the appearance of immigrants disturbs the consensus and homogeneity of European societies. (Salcedo 2007: 65)

The spaces of Tate Modern have, to a great extent, followed architectural practices and concepts based on traces of modern ideals about buildings and art spaces in particular as I will discuss in the following sections. Succeeding the tradition of whitewashed galleries, the patina of the walls of the old power station was extinguished. Clean, ordered spaces have been an objective for both architects and client. Any sign of decay, dirt, disused machinery or object have no place in the new space. Dirt is a shibboleth for Tate Modern's spaces.

4.3 Dirt, order and ambivalence

> […] if uncleanness is matter out of place, we must approach it through order. Uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained. To recognise this is the first step towards insight into pollution. (Douglas 1978: 40)

The anthropologist Mary Douglas, in her seminal 1966 work *Purity and Danger* exemplifies how meanings entangled with dirt, pollution, and impurity are produced by the way that systems of classification are shaped, and she examines the impact of those meanings on how materiality is experienced and categorised. She makes clear the association between dirtiness and disorder. She argues that '[a]s we know it, dirt is essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder […] Dirt offends against order' (1978: 2). She argues that what we call dirt is socially constructed and culturally determined.

The notion of dirt has been to a great degree attached to 'the concept of pathogenicity' (Douglas 1978: 35), ruled by the findings of bacteriology in the nineteenth century. This had an impact on modern interior design, furniture, and objects – both of domestic and public spaces, such as, bathrooms, bedrooms, railway carriages and hospitals. Manufacturers and advertisers exploited the anxiety about dirt, for selling products that promise removing dirt, dust and bacteria, and contributed to the attainment of a hygienic environment (see Forty 2005: 156-181). In order to analyse the implications of the notion of dirt, Douglas suggests that we need to look beyond the historical moment that dirt intertwined with pathogenic microorganisms, where dirt acquires the definition as 'matter out of place': '[i]f we can abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from our notion of dirt, we are left with the old definition of dirt as matter out of place' (1978: 35) she argues.

Dirt as 'a matter out of place' represents what does not comply with the established order, is a distraction that constitutes a threat and provokes anxiety and discomfort. We organise into patterns the facts, ideas, objects that fit well within the created pattern, and we tend to reject those that challenge our assumptions. Whatever is rejected or resists being categorised is labelled as dirt, thus, dirt 'includes all the rejected elements of ordered systems' (1978: 35). Shaping a concrete taxonomy may be an attempt to make sense [i]n a chaos of shifting impressions' (Douglas 1978: 36), but it is then when 'a conservative bias is built' (Douglas 1978: 36). For fearing contamination or violation of the systematic classification, we expel dirt as unrelated and unwelcome. It is apparent that the need to keep dirt away is essentially the need to keep an order to the system in question. As soon as we categorise and label an unexpected form into our system, the order is restored and ambiguity vanishes, as Douglas puts it: 'by settling for one or other interpretation, ambiguity is often reduced'

(1978: 39). The investment in a system of labels becomes greater as the tendency of filing uncomfortable facts becomes greater.

If we accept Douglas argument that 'the yearning for rigidity is in us all. It is part of our human condition to long for hard lines and clear concepts' (1978: 162), we should consider how we make the systems of classification flexible to accept the different, the new, the other; how we revise these systems and open up their possibilities. Depending on how elastic the individual or the cultural system is to revise and modify their patterns and processes of categorisation, it can intentionally ignore the unexpected, minimising the possibilities; or, it can 'try to create a new pattern of reality in which it has a place' (Douglas 1978: 38), so as to acknowledge and accept the unforeseen.

Douglas's approach to dirt and disorder indicates that there is a system that not only coexists with what does not comply with its methodical order, but also produces the elements it excludes. We should not look at dirt as a 'unique, isolated event' (Douglas 1978: 35), but consider that dirt cohabits with a systematic ordered arrangement and in fact is a product of this methodical classification: '[w]here there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements' (1978: 35), argues Douglas. The displacement of one element of a system to another, or the inability to classify an element into any known system can provoke confusion, uncertainty and ambiguity. Thus, in an attempt to minimise the risk of destroying the order and to eliminate ambivalence, what we call dirt needs to be eradicated.

Zygmunt Bauman in his book *Modernity and Ambivalence* (1991) gives an insight into how ambivalence is a by-product of classification, related to the obsession for order within modernity, and its extinction is not actually achievable. He explains that to classify is 'to give the world *structure*: to manipulate its probabilities; to make some events more likely than some others; to behave as if events were not random, or to limit or eliminate randomness of events' (1991: 1, italics original). However, he argues that despite the painstaking effort of dividing, naming, classifying 'ambivalence is unlikely ever to become truly extinct' (1991: 2). Bauman follows an analogous argument to this pursued by Douglas in her analysis of dirt, claiming that '[a]mbivalence is a side-product of labour of classification; and it calls for yet more classifying effort' (1991: 3). The more divisions a system pursues the more chances

for ambiguity appear. Bauman argues for the impossibility of attaining absolute order, a task that modernity rigidly followed:

> Among the multitude of impossible tasks that modernity set itself and that made modernity into what it is, the tasks of order (more precisely and most importantly, of *order as a task*) stands out – as the least possible among the impossible and the least disposable among the indispensable, as the archetype for all other tasks, one that renders all other tasks mere metaphors of itself. (1991: 4, italics original)

The 'paramount strategies of modern practice' (1991: 14), such as geometry, the grid, the records, the statistics, the categorisation, manifest that 'modern mastery is the power to divide, classify and allocate – in thought, in practice, in the practice of thought and in the thought of practice' (1991: 14) Bauman observes. Following rationalistic principles of categorising the modern world attempted to eliminate ambivalence, however, as Bauman asserts 'the world is not geometrical. It cannot be squeezed into geometrically inspired grids' (1991: 14). The establishment of modern classifications have produced what we call 'waste', as Bauman explains: '[w]eeds are the waste of gardening, mean streets the waste of town-planning, dissidence the waste of ideological unity, heresy the waste of orthodoxy, strangerhood the waste of nation-state building' (1991: 14). Whatever is disregarded by systems of classification, this that crosses boundaries of separation and mingles 'categories that must not mix' (Bauman 1991: 14), is characterised as waste. Thus, within the systems of order that modernity introduced, ambivalence, as Bauman claims, becomes the waste of modernity: '[i]f modernity is about the production of order then ambivalence is *the waste of modernity*' (1991: 14, italics original).

The tension between order and chaos creates ambivalence. However, the concepts of chaos and order are inseparably connected. As Bauman observes, chaos is 'a product of order's self-constitution: its side-effect, its waste' (1991: 7), yet it constitutes a precondition of order, since '[w]ithout the negativity of chaos, there is no positivity of order; without chaos, no order' (1991: 7). Bauman explains that for a rigid system of classification, there is not an alternative order; the other of order is chaos:

> The other of order is not another order: chaos is its only alternative. The other of order is the miasma of the indeterminate and unpredictable. The other is the uncertainty, that source and archetype of all fear. The tropes of 'the other of order' are: undefinability, incoherence, incongruity, incompatibility, illogicality, irrationality, ambiguity, confusion, undecidability, ambivalence. (1991: 7)

The fear of randomness, chaos, unpredictability leads to the formation of even tighter patterns, assumption and neat categories; however, by clinging onto fixed forms we exclude possibilities, alternatives and other prospects. New possibilities go unexplored, or even unobserved, since they are discarded even before they fully emerge. The division of cleanliness and dirt is a prominent division that systems of classification uphold and produce. Dirt serves the grouping of undesirable concepts and actions and helps the system to maintain its function without being interrupted by the unwanted, the confusing, the unclean. Although we expel dirt in order to deal with contingency, complexity and ambiguity, which provoke uncertainty and confusion, I want to think the possibility of seeing ambiguity as pleasant and desirable. As Douglas suggests, 'it is not always an unpleasant experience to confront ambiguity […] The experience can be stimulating' (1978: 37). Embracing ambiguity is a way of enriching our experience, a way that opens up meanings instead of narrowing them down.

Consequently, the uncertainty and divergence that the notion of dirtiness entails, I argue, can become a creative escape from architectural patterns and principles that modern ideas and demands have produced and can still be ascertained at present times. As Douglas suggests that '[w]e must […] ask how dirt, which is normally destructive, sometimes becomes creative' (1978: 159). What if we reconsider dirtiness as a chance of revaluating patterns, definitions, categories and principles that govern systems – and specifically in relation to architecture and urban space – which agonise to stay clean and uncontaminated? In view of modern architecture that has sought clarity and order in its geometrical forms and in the function of its constructions, how can we consider the creative power of dirt in architecture? In the following section I discuss the relation of architecture to dirt in order to demonstrate the necessity of accepting dirt in architectural practice, since this challenges rigid systems of architectural order, challenges conventional assumptions and opens up meanings and uses of space. Thus, I intend to establish and emphasise the significance of dirt and ambivalence in relation to the Tate Modern's building, and enlighten the discussion about its architectural approach.

4.3.1 Architecture and dirt

> Architecture only survives where it negates the form that society expects of it. Where it negates itself by transgressing the limits that history has set for it. (Tschumi 1996: 64)

Architecture has constantly sought order and clarity in its practice and concepts.[80] Dirt attempts to destabilise the order of the architectural system and comes into a sharp contrast with the concepts and principles of architecture. Thus, an architecture that pursues to determine an ordered and organised built environment and to proclaim the durability of its constructions has to defy dirtiness and messiness. This was particularly evident in the values and dogmas of the modern architecture, which although they have been criticized – and to an extent condemned – by contemporary architecture, have left their traces on the architectural practices and concepts of today. The modern movement of architecture was based 'principally in forms of reduction, simplification and concentration' (Connor 1997: 66), so as to make its innovative suggestions in the architectural realm. The functionality and formalism of modern architecture demanded a purified system governed by hierarchical architectural values. Therefore, the architectural content should not 'be distracted from its mission by the falsities and vanities of decoration, symbolism, etc' (Connor 1997: 67) of the past, so twentieth century architecture could declare 'itself purely and simply as what it was' (1997: 67), as Steven Connor observes. The beauty of architecture would be presented through its functionality: '[i]ts beauty was no longer to be incidental or supplementary to its function, for its beauty would now *be* its function' (1997: 67, italics original), Connor says. For the importance of the connection of practices and concepts in modern architecture with notions that surround dirtiness (and disorderliness) and their involvement into present concepts, in this section I present a brief account of dirt and architecture in the modern age and after.

In 1898, Adolf Loos, the Austrian architect and critic whose work and writing had a great influence on modern architecture, praised the plumber as 'the pioneer of cleanliness […] the first artisan of the state, the billeting officer of culture, of today's prevailing culture' (1997: 18). He claimed that 'without the plumber there would have been no nineteenth century' (1997: 15). For Loos, the water usage and sanitation of the urban environment was an imperative for a culture that requests modern development. He writes: 'may our Viennese plumbers do their job as fully and completely as possible in leading us to this great goal – the achievement of a level of culture equal to

[80] The Roman architect Vitruvius opens his chapter 'The Fundamental Principles of Architecture' in the *Ten Books on Architecture*, by saying: '[a]rchitecture depends on Order (in Greek *τάξις*), Arrangement (in Greek *διάθεσις*), Eurythmy, Symmetry, Propriety, and Economy (in Greek *οἰκονομία*)' (Vitruvius 1914: 13, italics original).

that of other Western countries' (1997: 19). Otherwise, there was the danger that 'something unpleasant, something very shameful, could take place' (1997: 19), Loos claimed. It is apparent that Loos associates the hygienic urban environment with progress and morality, while he celebrates the plumber as the ambassador of modern civilization. As Nadir Lahiji and D. S. Friedman observe Loos's interest in plumbing was 'not as a technology so much as a general critique of culture' (1997: 9).

In 1908, in his article 'Ornament and Crime', Loos's ideas for achieving the goals of modernity led him to exorcize any ornament of the built environment: 'ornament is no longer an expression of our culture' (1998: 171), he claims. Even in the title of his article it is obvious the direct connection he attempts to make between ornamentation and immorality, he writes: 'ornament is […] a symptom of backwardness or degeneracy' (1998: 171); and he goes so far as to identify ornamentation with crime, he characteristically says: 'a person […] who gives way to the urge to daub the walls with erotic symbols is a criminal or a degenerate' (1998: 167). At the same time, he claims that the absence of it declares intellectual power: '[l]ack of ornamentation is a sign of intellectual strength' (1998: 175). Loos's pursuit of a modern lifestyle, the simplicity and functionality in architecture identified principles and expressions that modern architecture followed.[81]

In the same line, the pioneer of modern architecture Le Corbusier, in his writings in the period 1920-1924, declared that '*[d]ecorative art is dead*' (1971: 13, italics original), supporting that '[d]ecoration is of a sensorial and elementary order, as is colour' (1946: 133). Thus, he celebrated the end of ornament and the power of whitewashed walls in *The Decorative Art of Today* (1925), when he claimed that the implementation of 'The Law of Ripolin: A Coat of Whitewash' would lead to 'perform a moral act: *to love purity!*' (1987: 188, italics original). It would be '[a]n act which leads to the joy of life: the pursuit of perfection' (1987: 188), as he asserted. Le Corbusier directly links the idea of dirtiness with lack of effectiveness and messiness with the lack of mental clarity and control:

> Imagine the results of the Law of Ripolin. Every citizen is required to replace his hangings, his damasks, his wall-papers, his stencils, with a plain coat of white ripolin. *His home* is made clean. There are no more dirty, dark corners. *Everything is shown as it is*. Then comes *inner* cleanness, for the course adopted leads to refusal to allow anything at all which is not correct,

[81] For a discussion on Loos's writing see 'Adolf Loos: Ornament and Sentimentality' by Harry Francis Mallgrave.

> authorised, intended, desired, though-out: no action before thought. When you are surrounded with shadows and dark corners you are at home only as far as the hazy edges of the darkness your eyes cannot penetrate. You are not master in your own house. Once you have put ripolin on your walls you will be *master of yourself*. And you will want to be precise, to be accurate, to think clearly. (1987: 188, italics original)

For Le Corbusier, thinking '*against a background of white*' (1987: 183 italics original) was an imperative for the demands of modern age, since it could rescue from confusion and could reveal mistakes. Le Corbusier marked the 'honesty' of white (1987: 190) and its ability to deliver a 'sense of truth' (1987: 165). He characteristically pointed out that the whitewash detects as 'a court of assize in permanent session' anything that is 'dishonest or in bad taste', it acts 'like an X-ray of beauty […] It is the eye of truth' (1987: 190). He attempted to connect architectural practices that identify modern ideas (and ideals), such as the coat of whitewash, with some kind of social justice by saying: '[w]hitewash is the wealth of the poor and of the rich – of everybody, just as bread, milk and water are the wealth of the slave and of the king' (1987: 192). However, he explicitly made moral judgments by stating that whitewash is a 'manifestation of high morality, the sign of a great people' (1987: 192). Le Corbusier, like Adolf Loos, defies any addition to the built environment that is not controllable, that may disturb the successful operation of the modern tasks. As is apparent, the discussion about ornament and whiteness is not only related to the style and aesthetics of the architectural design, but also with concepts and practices connected to dirt and order. Material faults or staining were unacceptable and they had to be eradicated by the application of whiteness; marks of the 'dead things' from the past would be revealed on the white wall (Le Corbusier 1987: 189). A white ripolin wall was a victory against signs appearing on the building either derived from its use or provoked by the passage of time.

The necessity of cleanliness and tidiness, the rejection of marks and stains, the discard of obstacles and deterioration, expands from the domestic space to the city space. In *Towards a New Architecture* (1923), Le Corbusier arrived at the concept of 'House-Machine', that is, 'the mass-production house, healthy (and morally so too) and beautiful in the same way that the working tools and instruments which accompany our existence are beautiful' (1946: 13). With his 'House-Machine' model he provided modern architecture with a symbol of high order and effectiveness, an ideal machine where life exists in a 'healthy' and 'beautiful' environment. Beyond the

interior of the house, the cleanliness and order of the city was essential. Chaos was an undesirable condition since it would prevent the modern goals from completion. Order was essential to human habitation, whereas the lack of it was an offence: '[t]he lack of order to be found everywhere in them [towns] offends us; their degradation wounds our self-esteem and humiliates our sense of dignity' (1971: 1).

In his book *The City of Tomorrow* (1924), he reinforced the idea of the ordered city and he exemplified the principles that should run through city planning. He asserted that 'a town is pure geometry' and '[w]hen man is free, his tendency is towards pure geometry. It is then that he achieves what we call order' (1971: 28). Le Corbusier, seeking perfection and order in architecture and urban planning, passionately supported the link of modern architecture with 'geometrical truths' (1946: 68). He celebrated the straight line and the right angle, he said: 'a modern city lives by the straight line, inevitably; for the construction of buildings, sewers and tunnels, highways, pavements' (1971: 16). He claimed that the right angle attains 'superior rights over other angles', it is 'lawful, it is part of our determinism, it is obligatory' (1971: 27), whilst '[t]he curve is ruinous, difficult and dangerous; it is a paralyzing thing' (1971: 16).[82] Le Corbusier arrives at authoritarian conclusions that touch the idea of tyranny in architectural practice, in the sense that there is no escape from the idea of formality and functionality of the design, either this concerns a domestic space or a city's layout. In order to support the superiority of the right angle, he draws on the laws of physics and geometry. Since the law of gravity reinforces verticality, the conjunction of the vertical and the horizontal produces the uniqueness of the right angle, in contrast to the infinite other angles existing in between (1971: 26-27).

Le Corbusier was a rationalist architect whose vision of city planning and organisation was based on strict geometrical values and emphasised the utilitarian side of architectural planning and designing. In his architectural vocabulary there is no flexibility, no place for the accidental, the contingent and the improvisatory. In a way he attempted to regulate the fact that cities have an ever-changing character and he overlooked the fact that imposing plans, which are presented as finished products, cannot control the dynamic of living spaces. His ideas about cleanliness and order have greatly influenced the western world of architecture and have also shaped notions

[82] It is worth noting that Lahiji and Friedman observe that the clean is associated with verticality and the abject with horizontality: 'verticality consists in its obstinate repression of the abject, the unclean, and the horizontal' (Lahiji and Friedman 1997: 8).

of taste and beauty in architecture. Although he attempted to demolish social and class barriers through modern architecture, making it 'an emblem of liberation' (Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow 1993: 75), his obsession with simplicity has led to the pursuit of a hygienic built environment that functions as a machine for production. In this built environment dirt becomes an obstacle, an undesirable deviation.

Robert Venturi in his book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966) attempted to break the rules that governed architecture until the mid-1960s. He requested a 'nonstraightforward architecture' (1977: 16), an architecture that embraces complexity and contradiction and which is 'based on the richness and ambiguity of modern experience, including that experience which is inherent in art' (1977: 16). As Tschumi observes, Venturi's book 'triggered an extraordinary and widespread reappraisal of architectural priorities and values, suggesting that there was more to architecture than the ethereal, abstract formulation of a utopian ideal' (1996: 229). This was in a period where the 'reaction against the perception of modernity as the abstract reducer' had started being expressed 'whether through scholarly texts or through the first organised protests against the demolition of neighbourhoods and landmark buildings in the name of progress' (1996: 229), as Tschumi notes.

Venturi claimed that although complexity and contradiction have been appreciated and accepted in other disciplines, from science to poetry, in architecture there was a resistance to acknowledge its complex and contradictory elements, despite, as he says, that these are inherent in architecture (1977: 16). The technological developments, the architectural program, the diversity of structures, the scale of constructions and planning present a variety of expressions and needs, often conflicting, increased the challenges of the architectural practice, but for Venturi the complications and uncertainties arising were stimulating. He stood against the established concepts and practices of modern architecture: '[a]rchitects can no longer afford to be intimidated by the puritanically moral language of orthodox Modern architecture' (1977: 16), he claimed. He sought an architecture that exemplifies the 'both-and' rather than the 'either-or' (1977: 16) an architecture that evokes a variety of meanings and connections and acts beyond its functionality:

> I like elements which are hybrid rather than "pure," compromising rather than "clean," distorted rather than "straightforward," ambiguous rather than "articulated," perverse as well as impersonal, boring as well as "interesting," conventional rather than "designed," accommodating rather than excluding, redundant rather than simple, vestigial as well as innovating, inconsistent

> rather than direct and clear. I am for messy vitality over obvious unity. (1977: 16)

His opposition to simplification led him to revert Mier van der Rohe's famous dictum 'less is more' into 'less is a bore' (1977: 16-17). 'Less is more' according to Venturi, 'bemoans complexity and justifies exclusion for expressive purposes' and this exclusion, demanded by simplification, leads to eliminate 'important considerations only at the risk of separating architecture from the experience of life and the needs of society' (1977: 17). In this 'exclusive kind of architecture', there is no 'room for the fragment, for contradiction, for improvisation, and for the tensions these produce' (1977: 17), Venturi says. The concept of 'both-and' that Venturi suggested is opposed the tradition of 'either-or' characteristic to orthodox modern architecture, which looked for clarity and functionality. The architecture that adopts 'both-and' as its hypothesis comprises, according to Venturi, 'elements that are both good and awkward, big and little, closed and open, continuous and articulated, round and square, structural and spatial' (1977: 23). Venturi's 'both-and' reveals the ambiguity that is inherent in the medium of architecture and accompanies the process of architecture: '[a]rchitecture is form *and* substance – abstract *and* concrete – and its meaning derives from its interior characteristics and its particular context. An architectural element is perceived as form *and* structure, texture *and* material' (1977: 20, italics original).

Contradiction and uncertainty in an architectural project express inconsistency, either within its elements or in relation to its surroundings, and disturb the consistent architectural order. Venturi supports that these conflicts provide architecture with vitality and validity: '[w]hen circumstances defy order, order should bend or break: anomalies and uncertainties give validity to architecture' (1977: 41), he writes. Although he turns to Le Corbusier's dictum that '[t]here is no work of art without a system' (1977: 41), he emphasises that '[m]eaning can be enhanced by breaking the order' (1977: 41); the order is a precondition for the act of breaking it. Also, he emphasises the significance of contradicted or 'imperfect' elements in architecture by saying: '[a] building with no "imperfect" part can have no perfect part, because contrast supports meaning. An artful discord gives vitality to architecture' (1977: 41).

The architecture of complexity and contradiction would paralyze the modern architect, given that, because of the juxtaposition of meanings and the overlap of its contents, it provokes ambiguity, and ambiguity is dreadful for modern projects of

architecture: '[m]odern architects with few exceptions eschewed ambiguity' (Venturi 1977: 16). This comes into contrast to art where ambiguity is acknowledged and even desirable and employed by the art medium to open up meanings and express multiple possibilities, as Venturi supports by drawing examples from literature, Pop Art and Abstract Expressionism (1977: 20). The confusion that derives from an architectural program, which integrates ambiguity into its agenda, should be anticipated and applauded, since '[t]his promotes richness of meaning over clarity of meaning' (1977: 22), Venturi says.

Ambiguity is alarming not only for the projects of modern architecture of the past, but for any architectural projects which pursue a tight program in contemporary architecture. Tschumi in his collected articles (written between 1975-1991) under the title *Architecture and Disjunction*, attacked the values, attitudes and dogmas that determined modern architecture at the beginning of the previous century, and which, to a degree, have influenced architectural principles of today.[83] He criticized modern architecture for not being able to bridge the gap 'between ideal space (the product of mental processes) and real space (the product of social praxis)' (1996: 31). Modern architecture with its abstraction and elitism was 'detached, or "abstracted" from everyday life – from people and, above all, from the community that was not allowed to "participate"' (1996: 228), says Tschumi. His theoretical as well as his practical work sought new concepts in order to articulate the interrelationship and interdependency of the ideal (conceptual) space and real (empirical) space.

The opening quotation of this section of the chapter was the text, written by Tschumi in 'Advertisements for Architecture' (1975), which accompanied the photograph of the infamous Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye in a state of decay. Tschumi found that the rotting Villa Savoye, the emblem of modern movement in architecture (1929-1931), had accomplished its architectural mission by *negating* its own architecture and the expectations of it. A visit to the then derelict Villa Savoye in 1965 ascertained its decay: 'the squalid walls of the small service rooms on the ground floor, stinking of urine, smeared with excrement, and covered with obscene graffiti' (Tschumi 1996: 73). But for Tschumi 'the Villa Savoye was never so moving as when plaster fell off its concrete blocks' (1996: 74). The symbol of modern movement in

[83] His writing has been influenced by the works of Situationists, Roland Barthes, Henri Lefebvre, Michael Foucault, and Georges Battaille; whilst his socio-political background, given his early involvement as a student in Paris in the uprising in May 1968, had affected his ideas about architecture and brought him in an open disagreement with the purity and functionalism of modern architecture.

architecture was rescued from demolition and discarded its rundown signs by being restored. However, it was its previously rotting state that evidently testified the effects of time and that manifested the refusal and postponement of modernity's utopia, signifying what Renate Hejduk suggests: '[t]he dirty and rotting Villa Savoye represents the end of a regime, the end of clean mechanical reproduction, the end of the new order, and the beginning of a new conception of space' (2007: 401).

Tschumi expressed his antithetical view to modernist blindness, in his article 'Architecture and Transgression', written in 1976, by proposing an architecture of transgression and eROTisicm (the emphasis on the letters highlights the existence of the rot (decay, decomposition) within the word eroticism and in consequence in the meaning and quality of the erotic). Modern architecture feared decay and the passing of time and this had an impact on how physical space was materialised. 'Not surprisingly, glass and glazed tiles have been among the preferred materials of the movement – for they do not reveal the traces of time' (1996: 74), Tshumi observes. Dirty and decaying constructions, this 'part of life that resembles death', has been ignored in an architecture practice that seeks clarity, order and formality, and certainly dirtiness and decay were 'incompatible with both the ideology of modernity and with what might be called conceptual esthetics' (1996: 74).

Tschumi explores the two ends: life and death, in architecture and in its relation to society. As he observes '[e]ach society expects architecture to reflect its ideals and domesticate its deeper fears' and in response, 'architecture and its theorists rarely negate the form that the society expects of it' (1996: 72). Therefore, it is no surprise that that the modernist tradition 'reflected the deep and unconscious fears of society' (1996: 72), thus, for example, 'Loos's celebrated attack on the intrinsic criminality of ornament was echoed by the modern movement's admiration for engineering "purity," and its admiration was translated into architectural terms by an unconscious consensus' (1996: 72). Death, and specifically the decomposing state that shadows it, was excluded from the ideal modern life, hence, it had to be excluded from architecture, there was only one exception, that of the 'white bones': '[d]eath is tolerated only when the bones are white' (1996: 72), Tschumi says, and continues:

> The anguish about death, however, only related to the phase of decomposition, for white bones did not possess the intolerable aspect of corrupted flesh. Architecture reflected these deep feelings: putrefying buildings were seen as unacceptable, but dry white ruins afforded decency and respectability. (1996: 72-73)

For Tschumi, architecture realises itself in the meeting of death and life, and not by the way that this may be manifested in the comfort of white ruins, but in '*the rotten point*, the very point that taboos and culture have always rejected' (1996: 76, italics original). This is the point where mental space encounters spatial praxis, 'it is my contention', Tschumi writes, 'that the *moment of architecture* is that moment when architecture is life and death at the same time, when the experience of space becomes its own concept' (1996: 74, italics original). It is through the decay that ideal space meets real space: '[r]ot bridges sensory pleasure and reason' (1996: 76), Tschumi asserts. The space that literally materialises this meeting 'may possess the moldy traces that time leaves on built form, the soiled remnants of everyday life, the inscriptions of man or the elements – all, in fact, that *marks* a building' (1996: 77, italics original). As has been discussed, decay was a challenge for modern architects, who showed 'blindness toward pure engineering structures' (1996: 77), but most importantly it is still a challenge to today's architecture, since as Tschumi asserts 'most contemporary architects close their eyes to the traces of decay' (1996: 77).[84]

Tate Modern had to a great extent followed the modernist ideals of architecture. Its whitewashed galleries have discarded 'the intolerable aspect of corrupted flesh', which reminds us of the fear of destruction, decay and death. The ruined building of the power station was transformed into a rationalist building in which dirt and ambiguity are expelled for the achievement of a controllable and movement efficient environment. It had avoided the 'both-and' principle, rejecting ruination and accidental blend of building's materials, and it promoted, instead, the 'either-or' view, producing an interior based on the minimalist premises of art spaces. However, if dirt had been explored as a notion that provokes desirable ambiguity, then it could have functioned as a means for opening up the meaning of space.

I would like to note at this point that there is a danger of falling into the practice of romanticising the derelict state of previously operated buildings, and that is why I want to clarify that I am not advocating that buildings' past greatness should be seen as a piece of heritage and which should be remained untouched by new architectural ideas. Neither do I support a backward-looking attitude that idealises the

[84] However, there are architectural examples, in which dirt has been incorporated into the refurbishment of built structures, such as the 'Dirt House', in which dirt has creatively been explored by the architects (see Campkin 2007), and the Wapping Project, the previous hydaulic power station (see Wapping Project www).

past. What I attempt to emphasise is that by acknowledging that dirt and ambiguity are inherent in life as well as in architecture, the expression of life through architecture has to embrace the fragment and the contradictory. Instead of resisting to the accidental occurrences and the consequences of time on spatial structures, architecture has more to gain by progressing alongside them. Dirtiness can enrich architectural structures' meaning, and the built space can acquire improvisational and contingent characteristics, which make it 'porous' (see Massey 1994) and 'loose' (see Franck and Stevens 2007), open to possibilities, thus, space becomes an arena in which people's participation and imagination is enhanced.

4.4 Un-chronological hang and Tate Modern's architectural approach

Serota in *Experience of Interpretation* (1996) analyses the process that museums followed in the way they arranged their displays from the mid-19th century to end of the 20th century. He describes how the historical grouping by school was followed by the chronological framework of hanging in relation to the artistic movement, later, the appearance of monographic displays of a single artist. And finally, the tactic of small museums to organise their hang in a way that escaped the classification of artistic movements and chronological taxonomy. This last method of display is for Serota what the new museum of modern art at the end of the 20th century should adopt, since it entails unexpected encounters, overlapping themes, unforeseen juxtapositions, and encourages visitors' individual interpretation. He characteristically states: '[t]he best museums of the future will […] seek to promote different modes and levels of 'interpretation by subtle juxtapositions of "experience"' (2000: 54-55). He examines the curatorial role as well as the artists and visitors' role in the way the system of display functions within an art space and he supports the notion that: '[i]n the new museum, each of us, curators and visitors alike, will have to become more willing to chart our own path, redrawing the map of modern art, rather than following a single path laid down by a curator' (2000: 55). He sees that the role of the curator should be 'to stimulate readings of the collection and establish those "climatic zones" which can enrich our appreciation and understanding of the art of this century' (2000: 55), and he concludes:

> Our aim must be to generate a condition in which visitors can experience a sense of discovery in looking at particular paintings, sculptures or installations in a particular room at a particular moment, rather than find themselves standing on the conveyor belt of history. (2000: 55)

The curatorial staff of Tate Modern adopted Serota's view since the opening of Tate Modern. The traditional tactic of arranging the artworks by following a time-base historical sequence was rejected and instead, the organisation of Tate Modern's artwork according to a theme was followed. In 2000, the Tate Modern Collection was divided into the themes of Landscape/Matter/Environment, Nude/Action/Body, and History/Memory/Society. In 2006, the Collection displays were organised under the categories of States of Flux, Idea and Object, Material Gestures, Poetry and Dream (Burton 2006: 13), which remain the core sections of the Collection to this day.

The hanging of the Tate Modern Collection suggests an alternative narrative, which is more similar to a collage, rather than a linear plot. It opens up the interpretation of the artwork and its meaning and it calls visitors to discover their own path and connections among the artworks. The art historian Briony Fer finds this 'a very deliberate and pluralist strategy', since '[w]ithin the overarching display categories, there are single artist rooms, and there are juxtapositions and confrontations between pretty dissimilar works' (Nixon et al. 2001: 5). Fer points out that 'there is an elasticity' in the categories in which the exhibits are organised (Nixon et al. 2001: 5). The practice of not following a chronological, linear sequence, but an approach that proposes a blend of artistic movements, styles, periods and techniques brings forward a new way of experiencing artworks. For the art critic Martin Gayford Tate Collection's way of displaying the artworks suspends time: '[i]n Tate Modern art history sometimes seems to have stopped: everything exists in a perpetual present; art from a hundred years ago jostles art from the day before yesterday' (2005:10). Gayford also points out that despite the criticism that themed presentation has received by art experts, there is a wider acceptance by the public and especially young people (2005: 12).

The Tate Modern Collection hang proved challenging for some art specialists and caused a reaction among critics, curators and art historians when the Tate Modern Collection opened to the public in 2000: '[v]isiting the current displays of the permanent collection is rather like plunging into a cold sea' (*Burlington Magazine* 2000: 479). The *October* journal (2001) published the discussion which took place after the opening of Tate Modern presented under the title 'Round Table'. In this discussion Mignon Nixon claimed that this approach to exhibiting the artwork is often followed by 'arbitrary or eccentric juxtapositions', which 'force you to make certain

kinds of connections' therefore it is 'not an openness, but much more a scripted presentation' (Nixon et al. 2001: 7). Certainly, this is a valid point that calls us for consideration of the curatorial role. Nevertheless, the non-chronological, non-linear display can act as a stimulus for a creative experience in the museum and can contribute to the empowerment of visitors' participation in making meaning among a range of artworks, means of expression and historical ages.

If this approach to displaying artworks opens up the viewer's interpretation of artwork by creating possible links, it can be said that it would be an effective method concerning the design of the building itself. Given that the building has been produced by the conversion of the disused power station, it represents different historical periods (this of its use as a power station, this of its dereliction and this of becoming a museum), different functions and different architectural concepts. To what extent does the approach followed in its conversion allow for further interpretations? Has the potential of the building itself been explored to enhance visitors' experience? Does the building have this sense of discovery that Serota seeks in the display of the artwork?

4.4.1 The exterior brick shell

Since what the visitor encounters first is the exterior design of the museum, the type of building the museum is plays a significant role and makes a significant statement as concerns its function, atmosphere and the activities that take place inside its spaces. Therefore, the façade of the British Museum, for example, with its reference to architectural elements of the Greek classical period, and specifically to the Ionic rhythm columns, conveys the sense of a space under a canonical order that pays tribute to some kind of 'universal system of classification' (Smith 1995: 244). Hence, the signal it transmits for the function of its interior space is rather explicit: 'however complex the range of exhibits on display inside, they are subject to a single, consistent architectural order' (Smith 1995: 243-4). In the case of Tate Modern what kind of meaning does the exterior of the building transmit? Does this comply with the interior experience of the building? To what extent does the exterior that belonged to a dirty and formidable building affect or interact with concepts appeared in the sanitised interior spaces?

Instead of altering the exterior of the building or even totally demolishing its structure, the architects Herzog and de Meuron decided not only to keep the brick box of the power station, but also to emphasise its volume and shape. Therefore, they

removed any extensions and additions that had taken place on the site through the years (see Moore and Ryan 2004: 136-137). The surrounding area was cleared and the main volume of the building was reintroduced on the city landscape. In this way the characteristic vertical tower highlighted the symmetry of the horizontal structure, and the building's proximity to the river became visible. The freestanding chimney, which once acted as the source of pollution of the city, became a welcoming feature in the cityscape that notifies visitors and passers-by about the location of the renowned space of modern art.[85]

Despite the glass surfaces added by the architects at the bottom of the brick walls and the light-beam at the top, the exterior shell remains as it was initially built and even preserves the discolour of its bricks (fig. 4.9, fig. 4.10). The timeworn exterior was considered worthy of being preserved and to not be cleaned, unlike the architectural strategy followed in the interior. For Serota a potential cleaning of the exterior would mean to 'wash away a certain sense of patina of history' (Sabbagh 2001: 54). Serota's response to the appearance of the building's exterior is characteristic, when he and the architect Herzog visited the space in the spring of 1995 to inspect the exterior of the building and the surroundings so to discuss the reconfiguration of the site:

> Serota and Herzog looked up gloomily at the brickwork on the north side of the power station. 'The first immediate response to the building,' Serota said later that day, 'is to scrub it down, make it clean and shiny, and it'll be bright and beautiful. But actually when you look into it you find the building was built in two stages, that there are slightly different bricks on the upstream side from the downstream side. If you clean it you're going to expose that. You're going to wash away a certain sense of patina of history. And there's a danger that we'll get the whole thing so cleaned up it'll no longer be the building that we wanted or that we saw or that we were inspired by. Now, on the other hand, at the moment its message is somewhat gloomy, austere, dirty. How do we strike a balance between those two? At this moment we don't have a solution.' (Sabbagh 2001: 54)

The fact that the architectural decisions about the exterior of the building have largely respected and appreciated the shape and the patina of the brick walls, I claim that it has been an advantageous strategy that benefits architectural practice as well as art. The timeworn envelope of the building emanates to the public signals that indicate

[85] In the second phase of the building's development the chimney, cleaned from flues attached to boilers, will possibly be a functioning element of the building again, but this time instead of sending polluted gas to the sky, it will gather visitors to its base and send them up to the top through lifts and staircases so to enjoy 'a breathtaking view of the whole of London' (Moore and Ryan 2004: 128).

informality (in contrast to the formality that prevails in well-established exhibition spaces), the colour of its red-brown bricks radiate a sense of warmth (compare to the white walls of a gallery), and the appearance of the exterior transmits a sense of historical connection of the building with the function of the city (the building generated electric energy keeping the city moving). Also, it is a building that praises the manual work – if we think of the builders' painstaking work who placed 4 million bricks one upon the other; this perhaps donates a particular importance to the meticulous, and usually manual, work of artists. The exterior comes into sharp contrast to the attitudes which prevail in the interior as I discuss in the following sections. It signifies the connection of materiality and art, and it significantly contributes to the popularity of Tate Modern, since it supports the idea of art being produced through the city.[86]

4.4.2 The Turbine Hall

In contrast to fact that the architects appreciated the original brick exterior of the building and its timeworn appearance, keeping it almost intact, the interior accepted the most dramatic changes. After all the machinery of the power station was removed, the entire interior was pulled down to the outside walls and the bottom layer of the structure, the massive steel-framed rectangular space was uncovered and the empty space stood ready to accept the architects' interventions. The architects' enthusiasm about the unique space of Scott's turbine hall led them to propose 'that the existing turbine hall should retain its character more or less unaltered and function as the entrance to the new gallery as well as providing a vast exhibition space' (Craig-Martin 2000: 21). They insisted on their architectural choice of keeping the space 'empty' and open, in a sense 'completely useless […] a space just for being in' (Nixon et al. 2001: 16), as Briony Fer says. The original division of the building into the boiler house and the turbine hall was followed by the new architectural plans. The art galleries were placed along the north side of the building, where the boiler house was situated, while the turbine hall kept its 'empty' space as well as its name (fig. 4.11).

The main entrance (fig. 4.12, fig. 4.13) is placed at the west end of the building and not, as some might possibly expect, on the riverside. It is situated at the end of an

[86] This would possibly be even more difficult to achieve if another proposal of Tate Modern's competition had been accepted and a shiny and impressive design had been built (see Moore and Ryan 2004).

exterior ramp made of rough concrete that reminds more of an entrance to a car park than the entrance of a museum. Although there is a secondary entrance on the riverside, it seems that the majority of visitors prefer to enter through the main entrance which is out of sight. The obscurity of the entrance, its relatively small size as well as the brick exterior, which has largely been preserved as it was, enhances the feeling of entering a site that remained neglected and formidable for years. The entrance to the power station was restricted to the public even before its dereliction, since its function as a power station limited the access in the building only to people with permission and expertise to work in its high-voltage spaces. Through the austere exterior of the former power station, the building reminds the visitor who enters that it was not a public building. The visitor is charged with a sense of exploration, which comes together with curiosity and often excitement.

Without touching and pushing a door, but passing unhindered through the automatic glass door – similar to many glass doors of offices, banks or stores – the visitor reaches the interior of the building. The vast Turbine Hall envelopes the visitor, its great dimensions – 152 metres long, 24 metres wide and 35 metres high – stretch along the entire length of the building. It forms almost half of the entire building, its dimensions are far from human scale and there is no way for the visitor to perceive it all at once. Herzog observes that the redevelopment work that took place in the Turbine Hall aimed to highlight the dimensions of the original hall, making the building itself an exhibit: '[w]e have left the turbine hall open, indeed we've enlarged it, dug it out, so that we can show as much as possible of the structure. Actually we are exhibiting the building' (Mack 1999: 42).

In the interior, the character of the building's industrial past becomes less apparent than in its exterior, but it does not disappear completely. The scale of the Turbine Hall, the long steel pillars, the glass roof light (although this has been replaced it still follows the original design) and the gantry crane at the ceiling, indicate its former use. However, signs of material failure or timeworn surfaces cannot be outlined. It needs a close look at the walls, surfaces and steel pillars in order to discover the rough and uneven surface of the walls, the rusted bolts and corners of the pillars. The hanging bridge, despite its volume that stretches along the width of the Turbine Hall, and even when it is in the middle of the ceiling ready to help the installment or de-installment of an art piece, is not truly noticeable. In architects' attempt to emphasise Scott's turbine hall, a limited selection of materials that recall the

atmosphere and characteristics of the industrial space were employed. Therefore, the architectural language was restricted to steel, glass and concrete. However, despite the careful application of materials, the overall architectural approach has extinguished almost all traces of the past use of the hall, as well as any signs of decay on the surfaces, and what mainly has been retained is the vast volume of it. The grey paint on the walls and the concrete ramp has covered marks and staining of the past and, thus, traces of the history of building's dereliction. The contrast of the atmosphere of the interior to this of its recent past can be confirmed by Karl Sabbagh's description:

> When the Tate acquired the building, the general air of rust and decrepitude created a rather Gothic impression inside the echoing building. […] Rain dripped into puddles, creating ripples in the reflections of the square rooflights 26 metres above the ground. Birds flew high up in the interior, depositing their droppings on rusting beams and disused equipment. Occasionally, from a few vantage points, there was a sudden glimpse of the dome of St Paul's thorough a broken window pane. And the eastern windows, if you cleaned away the grime, revealed the Globe Theatre under construction a hundred meters away. (2001: 11)

The slope of the concrete ramp smoothly pushes the visitors down towards the basement of the building. The visitor is not only exposed to the vastness of the Turbine Hall, but also to the glass panels projected towards the space. The lit bay windows are built in between the hall and the gallery spaces and call people to contemplate the view to the covered piazza of the Turbine Hall (fig. 4.14, fig. 4.15). At the same time for the visitor that walks on the smooth concrete floor of the basement, the people behind the glass openings hanging above become the first exhibits she/he encounters before continuing her/his journey in the galleries. The visitor entering the building slides down the ramp and is invited to experience the basement of the structure before going up to the other levels of the building and visiting the art galleries.[87]

Glass panels, fitted across the entire length of the roof, allows the daylight to intrude into the building and leads the visitor's eyes upwards, contributing to an uplifting experience.[88] A bridge platform, in line with the ground level, divides the Turbine Hall in two and it is a kind of remnant of the deck that surrounded the turbines

[87] The Tate's committee feared the situation of visitors stepping down the ramp without entering the galleries; but the opposite situation was also problematic for the architects (see Sabbagh 2001).

[88] The opening on the roof, according to Mircea Eliade in different cultures and periods has different symbolic meanings, thus it may symbolise the '*passage* from one mode of being to another, from one existential situation to another' (1959: 180, italics original); it can express 'the ascending direction to heaven, the desire for transcendence' (1959: 181), as well as the opening through which 'the soul of the dead person departs' (1959: 174).

of the power station. The constant hum of the electricity distribution station that echoes in the Turbine Hall is also one of the few signs that manifest the past use of the building. The set of transformers at the control room, situated at the south side of the building, produce a continuous and monotonous hum, since they still remain active, converting electricity from high to lower voltage so that power can be transferred to city dwellings. London Electricity refused to move the Switch House to another site, and this constituted a problematic issue for the architects. The architects would have preferred the entire site to be free and available for their design alterations, as this would have made the realisation of their plans easier and it would have also prevented the persistent hum of the electric devices from spreading around the Turbine Hall (Sabbagh 2001: 10-11, 51). Since the removal of the switch station was not achieved the hum is still evident in the Turbine Hall, contributing in a way to the dirtiness of the building and reminding visitors of the unclean past state of the building. Yet, the architects have managed to diminish the steady, continuous sound of the machines. With the new development plans of Tate Modern the architects will manage to extinguish the subtle humming, since the machinery of the Switch House will move elsewhere, and thus, the making of Tate Modern even more 'clean' will be accomplished.

4.4.3 The galleries

The exhibition suites of Tate Modern follow the 'white cube' characteristics that traditionally appear in modern galleries. The plain rectangular rooms do not differ to a great degree from the minimalist stripped-down spaces of modern galleries, which with their careful artificial lighting, their well-adjusted temperature serves the well-established conventions that govern the exhibition spaces. The old brick exterior of Tate Modern in reality hides a new whitewashed gallery, the cleaned and neutralised interior does not correspond with the dark and dirty industrial space of the past, and which is manifested to a larger degree in the exterior. The building acts as a 'disguised' white cube.

The exhibition space has taken up most of the former boiler house and it expands to more than 12,000 square metres.[89] It is organised in six sets of rooms on

[89] According to Raymund Ryan, Tate Modern comprises 133,500 square feet (40,6908 square metres), from which 12,402 square metres are for exhibition space (Moore and Ryan 2004: 15). Therefore, although the almost 12,000 square metres of exhibition space seems a large number, overall, it is only

levels three, four, and five, and on the ground floor by the river. The galleries on levels three and five host the Tate Modern Collection with free entrance, whilst these on level four house temporary exhibitions for paying visitors. The architects' initial intention to design column-free gallery spaces so these could be completely flexible was not realised, since the Tate Board did not consider that this would be advantageous.[90] On busy days the relatively small and confined rooms feel overcrowded and the inadequacy of the art galleries constitutes one of the reasons for Tate Modern's expansion. The architects attempted to make connections with the industrial character of the building. Thus, details such as the cast-iron ventilation grill rooted in the floor of the galleries (fig. 4.16) that 'look as though they have always been there' (Mack 2000: 91) and the rough unpolished oak floor, which is expected to show the signs of use through time, strive to present a utilitarian aspect of the galleries and make a link to the dirty appearance of the previous state of the building. However, the elements added stand as simple references to the old interior fabric of the building. They can clearly be identified as additions and they do not suspend the inevitable connection of the galleries with the traditional whitewashed rooms.

The Tate Modern's galleries confirm a set of codes which are commonly and repeatedly manifested in gallery spaces. As Kwon observes, the modern gallery museum, with its white and spotless walls and well-ordered architectonical elements, becomes an institution that addresses ideological models. The 'coded mechanisms' that are manifested in the modern gallery function as means to '*actively* disassociate the space of art from the outer world', as Kwon says:

> The modern gallery/museum space, for instance with its stark white walls, artificial lighting (no windows), controlled climate, and pristine architectonics, was perceived not solely in terms of basic dimensions and proportion but as institutional disguise, a normative exhibition convention serving an ideological function. The seemingly benign architectural features of a gallery/museum, in other words, were deemed to be coded mechanisms that *actively* disassociate the space of art from the outer world, furthering the institution's idealist imperative of rendering itself and its values "objective," "disinterested," and "true." (2004: 13, italics original)

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almost 1/3 of the whole floor area of the building. This confirms what Robert Venturi had observed in his lecture, which was given in April 1987, about his work on the expansion of the National Gallery in London: '[t]he ratio of space for art versus support space in the nineteenth-century museum was something like 9 to 1; today it is more like 1 to 2 – that is, only one-third of the total space might be for displaying art' (1988: 91).

[90] On the contrary, their experience of working at Tate Britain in Millbank showed that the column-free spaces have never actually fulfilled their potential and made the curating of artwork quite challenging; hence, the application of some architectural restrictions to the galleries were considered that would benefit the curatorial work (see Sabbagh 2001).

The practice of isolating and neutralising the gallery spaces has a significant impact on who is invited into these spaces and how art is considered. Often, the arrangement of the gallery renders the artwork as 'difficult', or only accessible to those who are considered as experts. What Brian O'Doherty claims in his *Inside the White Cube* in the middle of 1970s can still be confirmed today: 'the gallery space is *exclusive*. What it contains is, without initiation, well-nigh incomprehensible – art is *difficult*' (1986: 76, italics original). The prearranged ideas about space and art that are hidden behind the whitewashed walls contest those claims that foster the association of white walls and neutrality. As O'Doherty claims '[t]he white wall's apparent neutrality is an illusion' (1986: 79), and he continues:

> The spotless gallery wall, though a fragile evolutionary product of a highly specialized nature, is impure. It subsumes commerce and esthetics, artist and audience, ethics and expediency. It is in the image of the society that supports it, so it is a perfect surface off which to bounce our paranoias. That temptation should be resisted. (1986: 79-80)

Herzog explains that there are two different tensions in designing a gallery, one that wants a gallery being 'highly specific' and this leads the gallery 'to be too spectacular, too sculptural, too individualistic'; and the other that follows the characteristics of 'the supermarket', which 'has been developed to give a good orientation to put everything in the same light' (Herzog et al. 2004: 42). The architects' intention was to combine these two strategies in designing Tate Modern's galleries, as Herzog says: '[w]e have tried to take the best things from the supermarket and also the best things from something very specific' (Herzog et al. 2004: 42). For giving a clear orientation within the galleries and to expose the artworks in the same light, flat light strips embedded in the celling were preferred, and not, for example, spotlights that could direct beams of light on the artworks lights.

The gallery spaces – together with the cafes, the restaurant and the East Room (fig. 4.17) – have occupied the north side of the building and this has given the chance to some of the galleries to accept natural daylight from the windows. Although for Serota and the architects the daylight in combination with the ambient light of the rooms is a desirable way to display artwork, this has been an issue for some critics who consider that the artwork loses its prominence.[91] The rooms have a direct

[91] For example in *The Burlington Magazine* it was stated: '[t]here is much less natural light than might have been expected, and the prevalent use of ambient rather than directed artificial lighting, together

dialogue with the city through the slim window cut-outs that expand from floor to ceiling. The city squeezes itself within the window frame and it claims a place among the artworks carefully displayed. The intrusion of the city disrupts the concentration which usually appears in exhibition rooms when contemplating art. The movement of people crossing the Millennium footbridge[92] – which simplifies the access from one side of the river to the other but it also visualises the connection of Tate Modern with St. Paul's landmark (fig. 4.18) – the boats crossing the River Thames, and the details of the built environment form a kind of visual noise, or dirt, that invades the gallery space.

The 'new' space has been produced by being based on the top of ruins from the past, and supports spectacular views vista over the city that ever changes. When the visitors stand before the glass boxes placed above the original roof of the building, which extend the interior spaces of the building, find themselves in a privileged position to look at the city of London spread at their feet. The impressive panoramas of London offered to visitors, either those standing in the gallery spaces or in the glass boxes on the top of the building, become a means by which Tate Modern 'brands' the city; and through the city, it accordingly 'brands' itself as a product of a spectacular and cosmopolitan city. Julian Stallabrass asserts:

> […] seeing the city from the gallery is really important. It's like branding – a branding of the city […] It's incredibly important for tourists, particularly, that you are not encased in a building, that you can see exactly where you are. In the global competition of cities, such visual branding is highly significant. (Nixon et al. 2001: 19).

The immediate visual contact of the space outside the galleries with the other half of the building, the Turbine Hall, orientates the visitor within the building. This was included in the aims for designing the building: '[t]he interior was to divide the displays into manageable units for visitors and create a building in which, despite its great size, one would always have a sense of where one was' (Craig-Martin 2000: 18-21). The visitor, while looking down, becomes an observer of passers-by in the Turbine Hall, as well as becoming an exhibit within the long glass panels. The fact that at any time the visitor of the galleries is aware of what is happening at the other

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with the mixed-bag approach to display, often means that even quite powerful easel paintings can appear insignificant' (*Burlington Magazine* 2000: 479).

[92] The Millenium Bridge finally opened to the public in 2002 after two years of reconstruction works to diminish the bridge's sway.

half of the building, evokes ideas of panopticism and surveillance that attempt to control art spaces (see Bennett 1995 and Stanley 2000).

4.5 Contesting the shibboleth(s) of Tate Modern

Artists have incorporated dirt, rubbish or waste in the concept, process and materialisation of their work. Thus, for example, Marcel Duchamp's famous artwork *Fountain* (1917), a 'ready-made' object associated with plumbing and hygiene, challenged the boundaries of private and public, of the uniqueness of an art object and the mundaneness of life. Duchamp (1887-1968), among others, 'was responsible for legitimising the appropriation of apparent rubbish within an aesthetic context' (2005 95), as Scanlan observes. Furthermore, performative gestures, such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles's *Maintenance Art Performance Series* (1973-1974) contested the cleanliness existing in museums, and exposed the strenuous work needed for their maintenance. As Kwon puts it, her work 'revealed the extent to which the museum's pristine self-presentation, its perfectly immaculate white spaces as emblematic of its "neutrality," is structurally dependent on the hidden and devalued labor of daily maintenance and upkeep' (2004: 19). Ukeles's work, apart from challenging gender stereotypes, challenged the distinction between private and public and critiqued the often hidden manual labour required for keeping museums' spaces dirt-free.[93]

The *Shibboleth* artwork was not an art object as such, but a performative installation that moulded the building's material and shook its stable foundations and the preconceptions that it involves.[94] Cutting through 'a rationalist building' and what this represents, *Shibboleth* contested its ordered, controlled and clean spaces, by being itself an unwanted disruption of the building (fig. 4.19). It acted as a manifestation of dualities that suggested in the building itself: exterior-interior, order-disorder, cleanliness-dirtiness, marking the ideologies and practices upon which Tate Modern

[93] A recent exhibition in Wellcome Collection, titled *Dirt: The Fitly Reality of Everyday Life* (2011), presented a history of dirt throughout artistic projects as well as everyday practices from the 17th century to today (see Wellcome Collection www) and in the publication that accompanied the exhibition event, the politics of dirt are explored in the domestic sphere, as well as in a wider social and cultural context (see Cox et al. 2011).

[94] A recent sound artwork that challenges Tate Modern's foundation with respect to its source of funds is *Tate à Tate* (see Tate à Tate www), created by the activist organisations Platform, Art Not Oil and Liberate Tate (see Platform www). The interventionist audio tour (launched in March 2012) that takes place inside Tate galleries (Tate Modern, Tate Britain and Tate Boat) seeks to question the relationship between Tate and one of its main sponsors BP, the environmental and social practices of which are doubtful (BP has recently received the biggest criminal fine in the United State's history for the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster (see BBC News Business www)).

has been constructed. It intruded into the Turbine Hall, almost unnoticeable and descended down the slope into the building's basement where it established itself. This physical manifestation of the chasm can be paralleled in the ideologies and practices that subtly enter and occupy the art space of Tate Modern, they move further into it without being particularly obvious, they adjust the space and appropriate its use and when they have established themselves they become displayed.

The horizontal line that crossed the Turbine Hall and divided the hall into two – threatening to fracture it into more pieces with the emerging branches of the fissure – emphasised the difference between the south space of the Tate Modern, the semi-industrial 'empty' space of the Turbine Hall, and the north side, where the white and entirely new spaces host the galleries, shops, cafes. *Shibboleth*'s line can be seen crossing vertically the space of the Tate Modern, thus, the gap moves from the free public space of the Turbine Hall to the private collections to the membership spaces. From the blind, windowless basement to the slim windows of the galleries to the impressive three-sided glass walled East Room, where the panorama of London from the north to the east to the south, from the St. Paul's cathedral to the Globe Theatre to London Eye, opens up. Also the fissure highlighted the wider geographical division of London's urban space around the River Thames, between the south, where areas remain underprivileged, and the north, which presents a high level of reconstruction and financial activity.

The artwork *Shibboleth* was a performative spatial experience of those concepts and ideologies that govern the art space of Tate Modern. It demanded a careful, slow and reflective walk in order to be experienced. Visitors had to conduct a kind of an archaeological walk along the line, lean and look at its chasm and reflect on the ideas that sprung from it (fig. 4.20). Suspending their foot above the void was a moment that called for reflection: crossing the rupture that appeared on the smoothed concrete floor was a gesture of crossing divisions, attitudes and conceptions that are manifested in the ordered and dirt-free spaces of the Tate Modern (fig. 4.21). The material of the floor itself, along with the inserted pieces of moulded Colombian rock embraced by wire mesh, shaped the void that invisibly exists between the old and the new, the dirt and clean, the private and the public.

Although what the piece represented was connected with struggles between dualities, powerful and powerless, included and excluded, addressing 'desolation and destitution' (Salcedo www), the manifestation of the piece in the space of Tate

Modern was in a way liberating. Facing the effects of a violent action, such as drilling and destroying the smooth floor of the international museum of art in London, something that is unimaginable as an action from visitors, makes the space more flexible, temporal, able to accept, to receive. It broke its concreteness and gave to the building a sense of elasticity. In a sense experiencing the result of an act of a destruction that could not otherwise be expressed (apart possibly from a real physical disaster) in Tate Modern's spaces, discharges the space from the formality that Tate Modern tries to achieve by complying with the typical rules that govern the museums. The Tate Modern's space became manipulated and moulded stretching beyond its functionality. The scar left on the smooth concrete floor is a surviving trace of the artwork but also a kind of reminder of the previous derelict state of the building. It makes the Turbine Hall's floor dirty and contests the building's permanence (fig. 4.22, fig. 4.23).

If the Turbine Hall – mainly because of its scale – has affected the artworks produced for being exhibited in its space, I wonder how the gallery rooms could have affected the artworks exhibited if they had incorporated into their design more (dirty) elements of the past power station. And even if they had not had directly affected the creation of artworks, they would have definitely contributed to the interpretation of art. Since the neutrality of the white walls has been contested, given that the white walls carry ideologies and preconceptions about art and architecture, I would say that Tate Modern may have missed a great opportunity to become an actual alternative and experiential space of art, where materials, colours, textures, histories, past and present intermingle, juxtapose and come to a creative dialogue.[95] The sharp contrast between the interior galleries of Tate Modern and the exterior fabric of the building could have been less evident. The interior, and especially the galleries, which do not comply with the timeworn exterior of the building, adopt a minimalist perspective that seem to be determined to create clean and almost abstract spaces. As I have discussed, dirt challenges preconceptions related to architecture and art spaces, and that is why through dirt, space can be analysed as always being in a dynamic process open to time and use. Perhaps if the textures that have covered up in the Tate Modern spaces had

[95] Whilst the lack of boldness of the architectural approach to suggest an art space that opposes established practices, also seems to adopt a compromising attitude towards the debate about the rivalry between art and architecture. Architecture is often subjected to criticism because of its imposing and manipulative character in a museum that tends to overrule the experience of the viewer and distracts from the art, thus diminishing the impact of artworks (see Craig-Martin 2000, Blazwick and Wilson 2000, and Lampugnani 2001).

been incorporated in the reconstruction of the building, they would have provided a means to dissolve preconceptions that exist in the tradition of galleries. They would have broken formality, they would have given inspiration to artists and audience alike. Values surrounding artwork and art space would have been reconsidered, making art space more accessible and less exclusive.

Chapter 5

The National Theatre's Exterior: Its Urban Context, Architecture and Performative Aspects

5. Introduction: The case of the National Theatre

Britain's National Theatre possesses a dominant position within London's urban landscape. Its exterior makes a forceful statement within its surroundings, and in the city at large, with its scale, unceasing concrete surface, defined geometrical forms and distinctive architectural elements (fig. 5.1). The architect Denys Lasdun's primary intention was to create a building that is in contact with the cityscape and which acts as an open platform for people (see Lasdun 1977), in effect a democratic space. However, the monumental qualities of the National Theatre's architectural design make the building be seen as formidable and impervious. On the one hand, with the rather large volumes of its exterior, it establishes its prominence and permanency within the cityscape and places itself among the post-war landmarks of London. On the other hand, the architectural design of its exterior pursues openness and engagement with the city and its people.

The conflicts that are manifested on its exterior become even sharper if we consider two more parameters. First, the city is ever changing and in its spaces the accidental and the contingent appear. Since the National Theatre's architectural elements seek connection with the cityscape, it can be suggested that it seeks connections with both impermanency and flow. Second, the fact that the monumental building functions as a theatre, which means that it hosts the 'most' ephemeral of arts, reinforces the necessity of the building to connect with transient experience, temporality and flexibility – something that, at the same time, stresses the clash with its solid and inflexible exterior. In other words, the National Theatre's contradictory character derives from its design and its function as a theatre. What Lefebvre calls 'contradictory space' can be manifested in the National Theatre's building itself:

> The space of leisure bridges the gap between traditional spaces with their monumentality and their localizations based on work and its demands, and potential spaces of enjoyment and joy; in consequence this space is the very epitome of contradictory space. (1991: 385)

The monumentality assigned to the National Theatre's building – as well as the

fact that it is a working place for hundreds of people[96] – confronts the function of the building as a space of leisure that offers a transitory experience and entertainment. The building brings together the rational architecture structures that seek order and durability and the space of leisure that entails segments or moments of transgression, enjoyment, chaos, pleasure and spirituality. As Lefebvre puts it the space of leisure '*tends* […] to surmount divisions: the divisions between social and mental, the division between sensory and intellectual, and also the division between the everyday and the out-of-the-ordinary (festival)' (1991: 385, italics original). Lefebvre emphasises the inability of the leisure space to act fully as a 'counter-space', a space that position itself 'against quantity and homogeneity, against power and arrogance of power, against the endless expansion of the "private" and of industrial profitability; and against specialized spaces and a narrow localization of function' (1991: 382). This is because, according to Lefebvre, 'leisure has been transformed into an industry, into a victory of neocapitalism and an extension of bourgeois hegemony to the whole space' (1991: 284). However, he asserts at the same time that the space of leisure 'reveals where the vulnerable areas and potential breaking-points are: everyday life, urban space, the body' (1991: 382). This is of particular importance, since it leaves open the possibility of new opportunities to arise from the cracks that the space of leisure discloses, new opportunities to alter concepts and practices in relation to space and time, theatre building and city, architecture and users.

In this chapter, I examine how the architectural elements of the National Theatre's building perform within the cityscape. Specifically, I look at its exterior architecture and its connection with the cityscape. In analysing the exterior architecture and geographical location of the National Theatre, I show how these affect the National Theatre's function – which is the only case of a theatre building that is examined in this thesis – and the degree to which the building interacts with the city and its people. I focus on the exterior of the building, since the impact of its physical contact with the city is direct and it affects not only theatregoers, but also urban passers-by. I consider that the articulation of the theatre building, and particularly, of its exterior, expresses its civic importance.

Taking into consideration the significance of the building's location and how this affects theatregoers and non-theatregoers, I seek to analyse the meaning the key

[96] In 2007-08, the building was a working space for 800 people, as the Executive Director, Nick Starr, notes in the National Theatre Annual Report (NT Annual Report 2007/8 www: 13).

location of the South Bank donates to the National Theatre. The present site of the National Theatre is a result of long discussions, postponements and repeated changes; so to what degree was this choice successful? How does the present state of the surroundings affect the National Theatre's meaning and function? To what degree did the surroundings affect the exterior architecture of the building? In my discussion I move from the location to the exterior of the National Theatre to examine in which ways its design and use supports the building's public character. The exterior architectural design of Lasdun's building has been the centre of controversial discussions and views, and by bringing his architectural intentions under examination as well as the current state and use of the building's exterior, I unravel limitations and possibilities of its architecture. To what extent has the concept of the National Theatre's exterior design affected the building? To what extent do the monumental aspects and the complexity of the design permit or restrict the use of the building's exterior? How does the architecture of the exterior connect with the public and the city?

Apart from tracing how architectural strategies and concepts have affected the meaning that the National Theatre architecture emanates to the public, this chapter explores how performance concepts may diversify, challenge or enhance the building's architectural concepts. Therefore, in order to analyse the function of the National Theatre's exterior and the opportunities and limitations of its architecture, I examine performance events, art projects and performative actions that have happened outside its interior spaces, foyers and theatre stages. Thus, I analyse how the use of the strata and fly-towers for performance purposes, installation and film projections emphasises the link between theatre as an edifice and theatre as a practice, and attempts to underline its connection with the cityscape. I argue that performative practices and concepts challenge the National Theatre's monumentality and destabilise the view of its architecture being fixed and permanent. I consider that through a performative analysis this nonetheless immovable building can expose its dynamic presence, and at the same time connections between theatre and urban space can find ground. Thus, I address how ideas of permanency and solidity are contested by signs of decline and material failure that appear on the building's concrete surface. Whilst the weather marks question the structure's durability and expose the vulnerability of the National Theatre's monumental framework, they also bind the building with time and associate it with performance's ephemeral nature.

The discussion of the National Theatre's architecture and its function is timely, since approval for redevelopment plans of the building has been given. Haworth Tompkins architects[97] have been appointed to renovate the building, in order to meet today's needs and mission. Nick Starr, the Executive Director, summarises the mission of the National Theatre as to be 'bold, contemporary and accessible' (NT Annual Report 2008/9 www: 11).[98] The Master Plan has been conceived as an architectural scheme that will support the National Theatre's ambition for being open to a wider audience and responding to the demands of the contemporary city. By exploiting and improving the underused or defective parts of the building's design, the redevelopment plans aspire to increase the building's dialogue with the cityscape. The architects Graham Haworth and Steve Tompkins submitted the Conservation Management Plan in 2008, taking into account the architectural importance of the National Theatre as a Grade II* listed building, and after having examined the building's condition, function and location. They have proposed areas for improvement, by evaluating the present state of the building as well as the future plans for the South Bank area. Their potential changes seek 'to reinforce the cultural institution of the National and provide a more engaging relationship with the urban context' (Haworth and Tompkins www: 74), as they state in the Conservation Management Plan.

The National Theatre's £70 million scheme, named as 'NT Future', includes the relocation of the bookshop and repositioning of the main entrance so this will be directly accessed by the eastern side; the activation of the northeastern side of the building, relocating the service yard and opening a café in its place. Also, it will include the opening of the view towards the workshops and backspaces to the public, so to experience the production process of theatre-making; the creation of new working spaces and studios for designers, scenic artists and digital production; and the formation of an education centre called 'Discover'. Furthermore, the plan involves the connection of the Cottesloe Theatre with the foyers of the main theatres; and an extended refurbishment of the Cottlesloe auditorium.[99] Also, it requires the

[97] They were also responsible for the refurbishment of a series of theatre buildings, such as the Young Vic, the Royal Court, as well as the National Theatre Studio; and they have won many awards for their architectural interventions. For a discussion about the architects' work on Young Vic theatre and its relation to the area's past and current history see Juliet Rufford's article 'Haworth Tompkins' Young Vic Theatre' (see Rufford 2008).

[98] Whilst in the Annual Report in 2006-07, Starr describes the mission of the National Theatre as 'to be popular, inclusive and accessible' (NT Annual Report 2006/7 www: 12).

[99] Which is going to be renamed the Dorfman Theatre, after Lloyd Dorfman CBE, Founder and Chairman of Travelex and member of the National Theatre Board, who has announced the donation of

replacement of the Olivier Theatre's power flying system and the replacement of the Lyttelton's manual flying system with power. Finally, the plan considers strategies for reducing energy consumption, by improving, for example, heat and power systems (see NT Future www). In general, the redevelopment of the National Theatre seeks to increase the impact and the porosity of the landmark building. This complies with the general approach of the National Theatre that attempts to expand its connection with the city and worldwide by initiating projects, for example, such as 'NT Live' in which productions are broadcast live to cinemas around the world. The examination of the Haworth Tompkins architects' views, evaluation and the proposed changes for the National Theatre is necessary for two reasons. First, to trace how the wider changes of the South Bank area affect the prospective decisions. And second, how the potential alterations of the National Theatre will affect the use of its spaces and by extension the theatrical and urban experience.

William J. R. Curtis's proposal: '[w]hether one thinks a building successful or not must depend ultimately on what one thinks architecture should be doing' (1977: 22), should be taken into account before someone decides if she/he is in favour of National Theatre's design or not. In this chapter, I seek to establish a performative reading of the National Theatre's architecture, through which architecture can be seen not only as a spatial but also a temporal practice, and for this reason its meaning and impact alters through use and time. The complex architectural character of the National Theatre derives from its history, its present form and its potential future; from the civic and symbolic values pursued in its design. The contradictory building of the National Theatre, despite the limitations of its design and its monumental qualities, provides opportunities for performative interpretations and actions, which open the dialogue between the theatre building and the city.

5.1 The location and orientation of Lasdun's National Theatre

As we have seen in the Introduction of the thesis, in 1989, Carlson declared that the theatre building with all its different architectural manifestations asserts its own space within the urban environment and is persistently present within the urban arrangements (1989: 6). Depending on the location's character, physical features and function, the theatre building attains a variety of meanings, and as Carlson claims, 'the

£10 million to the National Theatre redevelopment scheme (see NT Future www).

location will inevitably condition the public image of the building' (1989: 11). Thus, the architecture and activities of the quarter where the theatre building is situated affect audience engagement, their expectations and even determine the frequency of their visit. In this section I discuss the main characteristics of the National Theatre's location in order to unpick the statement that it makes within its location, on the one hand, and on the other hand to define how the neighbouring buildings and the layout of the area have affected its public character and design.

There was more than a century from the time when the idea of a National Theatre in England first appeared to the moment that Lasdun's building first opened its doors to the audience.[100] This was due to a continuous debate about the location of a national theatre, the building's size, architecture and function, as well as the means of its funding (see Williams and Hutchinson 1997). The location which would be chosen, alongside the wider planning schemes held for each location, would not only affect the architecture of theatre's exterior,[101] but also the theatre's relation with the city and its audience. After a long consideration of a range of sites (see Whitworth 1951: 192, 196), the first that was purchased was Cromwell Gardens in Kensington opposite the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1937.[102] The South Bank riverside area would not be considered before 1942 (Whitworth 1951: 181) when the London County Council (LCC) put forward the idea of including the National Theatre in the South Bank's land as part of their development plans for the area (Whitworth 1951: 217). However, even within this district plans for the National Theatre had to be repeatedly modified since the theatre had to change sites. Four sites suggested and plans were developed for each one of them (see Williams and Hutchinson 1997), until in 1967 the National Theatre finds eventually its last location on the South Bank to the east side of Waterloo Bridge and its construction started in 1969.[103]

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[100] The first 'Proposition for a National Theatre' was made in 1848 by the London publisher Effingham Wilson, the supporters of which included Charles Dickens and Charles Kemble (Whitworth 1951: 28-29). Wilson's proposal was followed by Harley Granville Barker and William Archer's first detailed strategy for a National Theatre in 1903 (Haill and Wood 1998, unpaged).

[101] Thus, for example, in the middle of the 1940s, the plans that had been submitted by the architect Edwin Lutyens in collaboration with Cecil Masey needed to be modified, since the LCC wished the theatre to be part of the business district in the South Bank area: 'the Council were now envisaging the theatre as the centre-piece of a row of commercial or official buildings to occupy the entire tract of land between the Waterloo and Hungerford bridges' (1951: 220), as Geoffrey Whitworth mentions.

[102] It is worth noting that although there was an anxiety because of the vicinity of the site to museums, alongside doubts about the size of the site, Bernard Shaw considered that the National Theatre being in a museum district that supports 'an academic atmosphere' was actually an asset (Whitworth 1951: 200).

[103] Although the estimated completion of the building was in 1973, because of construction difficulties, the theatre accepts its first public visit in 1976. Subsequent to Peter Hall's decision, who had become

The geography of the National Theatre's location contributes to the site's uniqueness and to the high visibility of the National Theatre within the cityscape. The National Theatre is situated on the path of the south side of the River Thames, the Queen's Walk, which stretches from the east, Lambeth Bridge, to the west, Tower Bridge. It is a path not lost within the urban web, but with clear directionality given that the waterfront in addition to the continuation of the pavement and the tree lines makes it a well-defined feature. The alignment with the waterfront contributes to walkers' confidence and orientation – although intersections with other smaller paths southwards may lack clarity and particular identity – and strengthens the 'image' of the path within the city in people's minds, in Lynch terms (see Lynch 1960). As a consequence the visibility of the Queen's Walk path emphasises the exposure of the National Theatre's building to the city,[104] whilst the proximity of the path and its visual contact with landmarks on either side of the river give the path a prominence and makes explicit the connection of the National Theatre with the other urban landmarks.

The site of the National Theatre is on the bend of the river, which opens the view that extends from St. Paul's cathedral to Westminster. The topographical link of the National Theatre, St Paul's cathedral and Somerset House – behind which the West End theatre district is situated – was called by Denys Lasdun 'the triangle' (Curtis 1994: 135); and it constituted an important element in Lasdun's architectural design of the National Theatre (fig. 5.2 and fig. 5.3). For Lasdun the fact that the river turns nearly 90 degrees offering a panoramic view of London makes the position 'magical' and 'probably the most beautiful site in London'. In his televised conversation with Peter Hall in 1976, published in the National Theatre online archive, he emphasises the importance of the geographical location of the building:

> […] it's a point in the river called King's Reach, which turns through almost 90 degrees and picks up a panorama of the City of London that stretches from St. Paul's round to Somerset House and on Hawksmoor's towers at

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the National Theatre's Director in 1973, of moving to the new building after one auditorium would have been completed, the theatre stages of the National Theatre opened to the public one after the other. The National Theatre staff had to move into 'the still unfinished South Bank building to prepare to open it theatre-by-theatre' (Haill and Wood 1998, unpaged). The first theatre that opened was the Lyttelton Theatre in March 1976, followed by the Olivier Theatre in October the same year and last was the Cottesloe in March the next year. Each of the three theatre's layout presents characteristics of three historical periods in theatre architecture: the open-air Greek theatre, the proscenium theatre and the flexible black box studio.

[104] Although the big trees outside the National Theatre obscure its view during the summer (fig. 5.4).

> Westminster Abbey. It's a magical position, probably the most beautiful site in London. (Lasdun and Hall www)

The 'anchor' staircase, the Olivier's fly-tower with its inflection towards Waterloo Bridge, as well as the link of the National Theatre's largest terrace with Waterloo Bridge all emphasise Lasdun's intention to connect the building to the cityscape. In addition to the Olivier's distinctive architectural component of flytower, the 'anchor' staircase that leads from the river walkway to Waterloo Terrace highlights the building's northwest side where the main entrance is also situated (fig. 5.5 and fig. 5.6). These architectural elements follow the 45 degree axis, which derived from the plan of the Olivier Theatre, the starting point from which the design of the entire building was originated: 'the symbolic centre of the entire building' (Curtis 1994: 132). The 45 degree axis, which defined the geometry, structure and orientation of the building was Lasdun's response to the urban landscape and as Haworth and Tompkins architects say rooted 'the building's architectural composition in a wider urban symbolism' (www: 24).

Lasdun's design sought to link his building with the key artery of Waterloo Bridge road and by extension with the other side of the river and particularly the theatre district of the West End, since the National Theatre was not built in an established theatrical quarter of the city. His concept of 'triangularity' reveals his intention to make visually explicit the connection of the building with already well-known landmarks of the cityscape, and to establish it among them as a modern monument. As Curtis claims, the axis on which the Olivier Theatre is situated, which gave a direction to the geometry of the building, is a 'grand gesture' that responds to 'other points of monumental intensity':

> Situating the Open Theatre in this way involved both a grand gesture and a sculptural response to other points of monumental intensity in the cityscape. The triangular geometry which is felt in every facet and angle of the National Theatre stems, in the long run, from this. (1994: 135)

For the building's western inflection another parameter that played a significant role was the geography of the South Bank at the period of its construction. The area to the east and south of the National Theatre did not only present any architectural interest at that moment, but it was in decline and it lacked public spaces and cultural institutions, in the opposition to the west area which presented some cultural activity and landmark buildings in the 1950s. As Haworth and Tompkins note:

'[t]he public riverside terminated at the NT site with no eastward route, and the land immediately to the south consisted primarily of derelict or obsolete industrial stock and undeveloped wartime bombsites' (www: 26). In 1976, when the National Theatre opened, the walkers travelling to the east had to discontinue their walk after passing the National Theatre's north side. The extension and renovation of the paved walkway along the river in the 1980s has encouraged the walkers' circulation. At present the recent constructions of the Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and Tate Modern are connected through the Thames's riverside route to the west which includes landmarks such as the Royal Festival Hall, London Eye and County Hall.

On the South Bank's walkway, where there is an increase of pathways,[105] a rise in the flow of walkers has been observed in the last few years. As is stated in the National Theatre Annual Report in 2006-07, the footfall along the river was estimated at 14 million per year (NT Annual Report 2006/7: 12), whilst the next year's report observes a growth of the number of people use the riverside passageway to 15 million per year (NT Annual Report 2007/8: 11). Additionally to the improvement of the riverside walkway, the accumulation of amenities in the South Bank, the new design of the pedestrian bridges joining the Hungerford Bridge (completed in 2002) and the construction of the Millennium Bridge have increased the flow of people coming from the north side of the river. This has greatly contributed to the proliferation of walkers strolling in the South Bank area and who can see or visit the National Theatre.

By the time the National Theatre was completed the three neighbouring buildings of the National Film Theatre, the Hayward Gallery and the Queen Elizabeth Hall had already been settled, marking the brutalist architectural style of the South Bank and its orientation to cultural events (fig. 5.7). The construction of the three significant buildings in addition to the Royal Festival Hall was part of the redevelopment of the rundown area after the Second World War, making significant cultural and architectural statements. For the South Bank, hosting the Festival of

[105] In the Land Use Statistics in Lambeth area it is reported that in November 2001 the 'Area of Path' covered 280.58 thousands of square meters (Office for National Statistics, Lambeth: Physical Environment, Nov. 2001 www) and in January 2005 the 'Area of Path' increased to 314.26 thousands of square meters (Office for National Statistics, Lambeth: Physical Environment, Jan. 2005 www). Whilst, specifically, in the area SE1 9PX, which includes the National Theatre, the 'Area of Path' covered 1.06 (m2) (thousands) in November 2001 (Office for National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics SE1 9PX, Nov. 2001 www) and 1.60 (m2) (thousands) in January 2005 (Office for National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics, SE1 9PX, Jan. 2005 www). And the area adjacent to the National Theatre towards the west, SE18XX, increased from 0.25 in November 2001 (Office for National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics, SE1 8XX, Nov. 2001 www) to 1.20 in January 2005 (Office for National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics, SE1 8XX, Jan. 2005 www).

Britain in 1951 was a significant moment, since it began to be promoted as a place for arts and commercial activities. The Royal Festival Hall is a central landmark of that period; it opened in 1951 and underwent considerable redevelopment twice.[106] The Royal Festival Hall together with the Hayward Gallery and Queen Elizabeth Hall, both opened in the end of the 1960s, formed the arts complex known today as the Southbank Centre in 1988. Adjacent to the National Theatre, underneath Waterloo Bridge, is the former named National Film Theatre (NFT), situated in the current location at the end of the 1950s, and to the south is the Museum of the Moving Image, opened in 1988. The union of the NFT and the Museum of the Moving Image formed the British Film Institute (BFI) in 2007 (fig. 5.8).

The Hayward Gallery and Queen Elizabeth Hall buildings demonstrate the roughest form of the brutalist movement in architecture, and because they did not find favour with public opinion and did not encourage people's engagement with the area, the region experienced 'decades of public disaffection' (Haworth and Tompkins www: 64). The attempt to emphasise the public character of the buildings 'was never entirely satisfactory in practice, and the dark undercrofts and obscure circulation around the South Bank proved to be deeply unpopular' (www: 64), Haworth and Tompkins observe. Despite the improvements of the area, the institutions established in the South Bank still accept a great deal of discussion and criticism in relation to their architectural approach. Thus, for example, in 2001 Deyan Sudjic states in *The Observer*:

> Slowly, inexorably, the 30 acres of the South Bank are turning into a museum. A museum of how not to run cultural institutions. A museum of how not to replan the heart of a city. Like all museums, there are bright corners - the village hall atmosphere of the Festival Hall, the busy terraces looking out over the Thames, individual exhibitions and performances. But there are also huge dusty areas untouched for decades and eaten away by decay. (Sudjic www)

The future of these sites remains unresolved, the action that can potentially be taken on these buildings ranges from pulling them down to prize them with a listed designation. Views like Michael Lynch's, the Southbank Centre chief executive, have been presented, who states in 2004: '[y]ou could replace [these buildings] with something much more effective' (Building Design www). In order to further improve

[106] One of which in the mid-1960s included opening its façade, foyers and terraces towards the riverside; and the second large refurbishment took place in 2005-07, which included extensive interior changes; and for which the lead architects Allies and Morrison won the London Public Space Award in the annual RIBA Regional Awards (see Lazell www).

the area's function and shift public opinion, three master plans have been presented since 1988 (see Haworth and Tompkins www: 66), and the plan that is still in operation was presented by Rick Mather Architects in 1999, which attempts to emphasise the distinctive characteristics of each building, support their expansion and make clearer their links with the pedestrian routes.

The use of South Bank's buildings constitute a thematic unit of an established cultural and entertainment district in London which may benefit the National Theatre, since it becomes a cultural space easy to find and visit.[107] However, because the built structures follow to a great extent similar principles of the brutalist architecture, the fact that the National Theatre is part of the South Bank's concrete cluster can be regarded as problematic, making the theatre building lose its 'architectural identity'. According to Carlson:

> As these major civic monuments [such as South Bank Complex and Barbican] become incorporated into clusters of other urban structures, however, the theatre begins to lose its architectural identity to that of the complex and the statement it makes as a whole. […] The English National Theatre, really several different theatre spaces housed in the same structure and connected by common lobbies and (as at Lincoln Center) to other cultural monuments in the complex by open terraces, provides even less of a sense of a distinct architectural unit. The Barbican Theatre is more amorphous still. (1989: 96)

Although Carlson's view is legitimate, the National Theatre's exterior, however, presents unique architectural elements, which I discuss analytically in the following sections of this chapter, that make the building a distinctive case even though these may present many similarities to the architectural character of the surroundings. Also, it should be distinguished from cases of theatres entirely implanted in their surroundings, such as the Barbican theatre, where the theatre building is totally camouflaged and the approach to which can be confusing and alienating to the audience (see McAuley 2000: 48). The National Theatre is a freestanding edifice that boldly and uncompromisingly exposes its exterior next to the riverscape; the pedestrian walkways make possible for the visitor to walk around it and experience it from all its four sides (fig. 5.9, fig. 5.10).

By the time the National Theatre was built it was not only standing outside the theatre district of the West End, but also in a by and large undeveloped area. Lasdun

[107] Certainly the office buildings occupying the southeast side of the National Theatre, such as Lasdun's IBM (1985) building and the ITV tower, discontinue the thematic unit of the cultural district in the South Bank, and as the Southbank Conservation Area Statement states they 'are of little architectural interest' (Southbank Conservation Area Statement www: 16).

emphasised the need for the National Theatre to be surrounded by the city's life, houses and shops, which would bring everyday activities closer to the theatre. He declares in the 1977 Architectural Review Guide dedicated to the National Theatre:

> Ideally the National Theatre should become another Hyde Park Corner but I have always stressed that the role of the River Thames could become an enormous asset, and that there is a tremendous need for new housing near the theatre. […] I want the theatre to be surrounded by life day and night and I hope that one day it will stand at the centre of a regenerated part of the city. (1977: 25-26)

The alteration of the landscape that Lasdun expressed was essential, in order to integrate the National Theatre in the city and make it open to the wider public, avoiding any potential function of it as an isolated monument. The building of the National Theatre was expected to act as a magnet for a series of development projects, such as housing and leisure centres, which would contribute to the revival of the area. 'Lasdun saw the National as a catalyst for re-urbanisation of the wider site' (www: 74), Haworth and Tompkins observe. Indeed, Lasdun's vision for the site of the National Theatre has been realised to a great extent as the South Bank has accepted, and will accept, a series of significant changes since the National Theatre first opened 35 years ago. The South Bank today is one of the most well known cultural and tourist districts of London. Indoor and outdoor performances and art pieces, art galleries, performance spaces, concert halls, cinemas, street entertainment, restaurants and cafés are hosted by the riverscape.

Further plans for South Bank's regeneration comprises of office and residential buildings, and commercial and leisure centres. A proposal that openly affects the National Theatre's site is the mixed-use development of the Doon Street which is underway, and it has been submitted by the Coin Street Community Builders (Coin Street Community Builders www). The Doon Street scheme will importantly influence the National Theatre's south side, given that the two sites directly neighbor each other along the Upper Ground street (fig. 5.11, fig. 5.12). The increase of activities at the south side, such as the activation of the back of the Royal Festival Hall with restaurants and multi-ethnic food stalls, have already started transforming the Upper Ground/Belvedere Road from a kind of backstreet into a lively street that extends public activities towards the south. These changes are considered crucial by the architects for producing their development plans of altering the rear of the building (Haworth and Tompkins www: 106).

Considering that during the period when the National Theatre was completed the majority of the backstreets were inactive and there was no interest in orientating the development of the building to the south and to the east, its back and side sections are less distinctive architecturally and they lack openings (fig. 5.13, fig. 5.14). This, according to the architects, makes the building's design insufficiently related to the larger change of the southwards cityscape, and it contributes to the building's 'lack of porosity': '[t]he National's inert rear and side edges, its lack of porosity at all but its western corner, and the presence of a service yard on prime riverside territory now appear incongruous in this changing context' (Haworth and Tompkins www: 74). The redevelopment that has taken place to the river frontage as well as to the backstreets of the South Bank is considered as a key reason that necessitates the alteration of the rear spaces of the National Theatre's building.[108] For increasing the porosity of the rear of the building the architects also propose a series of alterations including the animation of the inactive frontages of Theatre Avenue and the Upper Ground, and the improvement of the area outside the Cottesloe Theatre's entrance.

Although the concept of improving the links of the building with the rest of the landscape can benefit its design and consequently its function as a theatre space, the way that this will be realised needs to be carefully examined. This is for two reasons; first, for respecting the architectural language of the building, and second, for avoiding the commercialisation of the theatre building. The extent to which the National Theatre's building should be attuned with the transformation of the South Bank needs to be considered. The building's rear vertical surfaces can be seen as architectural devices that resist the theatre building's absorption by the proliferated commercial and touristic surroundings. Given that commercialising art spaces affect not only the function of the spaces themselves but also the culture produced in these spaces, the National Theatre's lack of porosity need not necessarily be considered as a problem that needs to be tackled. The building's lack of porosity could be seen as a resistance to an increasingly commercialised area, and could emphasise the function of theatre as

[108] Another reason that seems to demand the opening of the rear spaces is the increasing public interest in the private spaces of the building, which is witnessed by the actual Backstage Tour that the National Theatre runs. As is reported in the Annual Report in 2002/03, almost 18,000 people had experienced the Backstage Tour during that year (NT Annual Report 2002/3: 54). The architects are considering opening up the back of house areas so as to allow the public to view the now concealed workshops (see Haworth and Tompkins www: 210). However, the Lasdun Group and Susan Lasdun have raised objections to the proposed plans since they believe that these will degrade the design of the original building (see Hopkirk www).

an alternative space and praxis to tourist spectacles and a profit-orientated world.

5.2 The concrete exterior

The National Theatre has been one of the most controversial buildings in London and it has attracted a spectrum of views that expand from strict criticism to great admiration. The *Time Out* online magazine notes that '[i]n 2001, a Radio Times poll featured Denys Lasdun's building uniquely in the top five of both the most hated British buildings and the most loved' (Edwardes www). The associate director of the National Theatre Jonathan Miller, before he resigned in 1975, characterised the building as 'a mixture of Gatwick airport and Brent Cross shopping centre' (Haill and Wood 1998, unpaged). In 1976, *The Economist* claimed that because of the National Theatre's distinctive architectural elements, the building emanates 'a strongly militaristic flavour rather like an aircraft carrier in collision with a Norman keep'; it attains an 'embattled silhouette' within the landscape of the South Bank, which holds 'something of a cultural concentration camp' (cited in Haworth and Tompkins www: 42-44). In 1988, Charles, The Prince of Wales, proclaimed the design of the National Theatre as 'a clever way of building a nuclear power station in the middle of London without anyone objecting' (1989: 45).[109] Whilst in the same year, the National Theatre received the title 'Royal' from the Queen (Haill and Wood 1998, unpaged). The straightforward design of the building, however, seems to not uphold the prefix 'Royal' as the building is widely known as the National Theatre, and in many cases people refer to it as 'the National', or 'the NT'.

Although the building of the National Theatre raised and still raises a great deal of discussion about its architectural design within the broader context of the built landscape, through the years it has become not only a familiar image added to the skyline of London, but the favourite design for many people. In 2007 *Time Out* included it in the 'seven wonders of London' – it was actually the only architectural landmark on the riverside that entered *Time Out*'s list of the 'man-made wonders'- whilst it was stated that a similar decision that would recognise it as one of London's man-made wonders 'would have been considered provocative until very recently' (Edwardes www). However, in 2010, the building received another criticism that

[109] His book *A Vision of Britain: A Personal View of Architecture* was based on a BBC2 television documentary where he first stated his views on the National Theatre and British architecture in 1988. Extracts from this documentary can be viewed on: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/9502425.stm> (accessed 17/11/2012).

refers to it as 'an anachronism: a brutal(ist) articulation of one narrow and archaic vision of theatre that, if not obsolete, is certainly one-dimensional' (Field www). The many descriptions that have been used to characterise the National Theatre: castle, cathedral, nuclear power station, prison, fortress, aircraft carrier, warship, concrete iceberg, shopping centre, multi-storey car park, testify the confusing signals that the exterior emanates, as well as its connection with spaces of constriction reveals the problematic aspects of its design. The spectrum of opinions presented since the National Theatre was erected have mainly been provoked because of the aesthetics of its architectural design; plain strict lines, defined vertical and horizontal volumes, and most of all because of its concrete texture.

The solidity and durability of concrete guarantees, according to Peter Hall, the strong presence of the National Theatre in the cultural scene.[110] In 1988 when he left the post of Director of the National Theatre, Hall asserted: '[t]his building in solid concrete will be here for ever and ever, whatever successive governments can do to muck it up. The place exists as a necessary part of the cultural scene of this country' (cited in Haill and Wood 1998, unpaged). The five-acre site of which the total built area reaches 'about half a million square feet, an area 10 times larger than the Old Vic' (Lord Rayne 1977: 48), alongside its uninterrupted use of concrete render the building a concrete monument. However, the monumental appearance challenges the relationship between theatre, audience and city, especially when theatre seeks openness and immediacy. The extensive use of concrete is a primary reason that makes the National Theatre a 'tight space', a 'hard building', and as Robert Sommer argues:

> […] hard architecture denies occupants control over their surroundings. The space is alien, bureaucratic, and seemingly unowned by anyone except the custodians or some impersonal remote authority. It is devoid of personalization and responsiveness to human input. (1974: 22)

Lasdun used primarily reinforced concrete not only as a structural element of the building, but as an ornate material of the exterior surfaces. The distinctive final result openly categorises the building into the brutalist architectural style of the 1960s or 1970s, when the use of concrete was extensively applied to modern edifices, suggesting the conjunction of form and structure, function and aesthetic. The

[110] It is worth noting that in 1937, during the search for an architect, the member and chairman of the National Theatre Committee Lord Lytton, stressed 'the need for a building which would be truly monumental, and likely to stand the test of time' (Whitworth 1951: 201).

realisation and completion of the detailed work demanded concrete of a high quality, and numerous skilled workmen on site, since most of it was produced and processed in situ. The distinctive pattern of the board-marked concrete throughout the public spaces of the building entailed high quality wooden boards which, by leaving their imprints when they were removed, gave the building its remarkable texture. The detailed and systematic work of the board-marked béton brut was recognised as an exceptional exercise of concrete and the building committee, architects, the engineers Flint and Neil and the contractors Sir Robert McAlpine and Sons gained the Concrete Society Award for Outstanding Merit in the use of concrete in 1977 (Haworth and Tompkins www: 34). According to the architects Haworth and Tompkins, the successful way in which restricted materials were used in the building's construction renders the building as the finest model in the UK of the last century (www: 46).

Concrete itself can be a monotonous and unattractive material, and its extensive use in the National Theatre has, it could be argued, contributed to the perception of the building as ugly and dull. Lasdun admits that concrete is 'a very intractable material', however, he claims that 'it can be a very beautiful material if it is used the way that its own nature intends it to be used' (Lasdun and Hall www). Subsequent to long discussions, plans, thoughts and ideas about how the National Theatre's building should be looked like, Lasdun's design asked for a building that is cut down to its 'essentials'. The meticulous mixture of material and structural elements, and lack of ornament characterise Lasdun's structure, who claims in his discussion with Peter Hall: '[t]oday in England we must do what belongs to today. I've got no time for the cherubs. I mean, we have a future' (Lasdun and Hall www). Lasdun saw the National Theatre as a building that expressed not only the present but also the future.

By and large the building was dissimilar to the theatre buildings that used to exist before it was erected, and its idiosyncratic design still remains unique. The use of concrete, alongside the design of fly-towers, communicates Lasdun's concept of not disguising anything in the building, but letting it be what it is: '[n]othing in the theatre has been disguised – it is what it is. And in a way this brings one to concrete, because a lot of people question the use of it' (Lasdun and Hall www). This approach implies that the building is endowed with a kind of 'honesty'. Its minimal use of structural material, based mainly on concrete, and the functionality of its structure encourage the building's attempt to avoid following the overly decorated exterior of traditional

theatres. The building exposes the bareness of its structural elements and proudly demonstrates its concrete rough texture.

Another reason that contributed to the choice of concrete was the building's structural and engineering demands. The large scale and asymmetrical shape of the building, which was conceived as a large-scale sculpture by Lasdun, required the application of reinforced concrete. Technically, the reinforced concrete is a strong material that contributes to the static system of the building receiving the weight of the structure and allowing big openings with fewer and slimmer vertical supportive elements. It was the projection of long supportive concrete beams outside of the building's skeleton, for example, that made possible the creation of the characteristic terraces. The concrete was also appropriate in order to isolate the theatre auditoriums from the exterior city sound. For these reasons Lasdun refers to the concrete as the most suitable solution:

> Well the form I have described – particularly the big terraces and the apertures through which you can see the whole life of the building - is one that can only be made physically in reinforced concrete. […] The building has to be very dense, because we are protecting the word from outside noises. The auditoria have to be embedded in a solid structure, and we can't afford stone – so concrete is the natural material. (Lasdun and Hall www)

The concrete may be a strong material that contributes to the steadiness of the structure, and it may be considered a dull and inflexible material, however, it is sensitive to weather conditions and natural light. It has the ability to reflect the light and perform correspondingly to the conditions of the weather and daylight. As Peter Hall notes, the building: 'looks very beautiful in the sun and less beautiful when it rains' (Lasdun and Hall www). Indeed, the grey concrete under the usually English grey sky looks unimpressive, cold and unattractive; whilst, when sunlight is poured on the building, its walls and decks reflect the light and the whole structure becomes convivial. The concrete skin changes from day to day and from season to season, or even from moment to moment when clouds and sun are competing in the sky.[111] Whilst it reflects the sunlight (fig. 5.15, fig. 5.16), it exposes all its greyness when it is cloudy. With the sunlight sharp shadows form their own geometrical patterns on its surface, cutting the geometry of the building and multiplying its geometrical shapes (fig. 5.17, fig. 5.18, fig. 5,19). Certainly the effects of the daylight on the building is

[111] This is also observed in other concrete buildings, see, for example, Curtis's description of Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts (1963) in the United States (see Sekler and Curtis 1978).

more dramatic on the western side, since larger vertical overhangs of the strata and more meticulously made vertical surfaces exist there. Because this side faces the west, in the summer months during the sunset the western surfaces of the building are coloured warm yellow or orange. During the winter or autumn, when it rains, the concrete exterior forms patches of dark grey (fig. 5.20).

For Lasdun, what makes the building attractive is the presence and the movement of the people in and around it. The people's presence is emphasised by the dynamic contribution of the 'bare stage' of concrete, which gives shelter to the theatre building without any need for excessive decoration. According to Lasdun, the choice of exposing the structural concrete material was necessitated – apart from the construction's demands – in order to achieve the immediacy of the dialogue between theatre space and audience. Lasdun's design attempted to rule out excessive ornament and explore the basic function of a theatre space:

> There's one other aspect of concrete which is partly architectural, partly to do with the nature of theatre. I don't want anything to come between people experiencing the theatre and your drama. It must be space, walls, light. And the ornaments of the building are people moving around – they are a moving ornament in a big bare space that is beautifully lit and carpeted. It is the minimum. It is protected space and nothing else, with God's good light and sometimes electric light as well. (Lasdun and Hall www)

Walking through the bare structure of the building, though, seems like walking in a site under construction. The 'unfinished' character of the building had become puzzling for the first visitors who entered the space, as the following anecdote mentioned by the architect Bryan Lawson manifests. In his first visit to the National Theatre's foyer – the theatre had just opened – Lawson overheard two old ladies discussing the new National Theatre. When one of them asked the other what she thought about the new building, the second replied: 'I suppose it will be alright when it's finished' (2006: 29). Lawson observes that '[h]er conditional approval obviously related to the deliberately exposed concrete finishes', and because she ignored the fact that the board-marked concrete is 'by no means cheap to produce, but simply does not look expensive' she 'had therefore understandably assumed it would be covered up in such an important building' (2006: 29). Certainly the fact that the building was not finished when it first accepted the public, in October 1976, contributed to the anticipation of the audience for the building's completion. Nevertheless, the main

factor that placed and possibly still places the visitor in an ambivalent position is related to the texture of the building's concrete skeleton.

Another issue that Lasdun points out is the weathering of concrete. The subtle transformation of the concrete surface, because of the long exposure to the weather conditions, is not only expected, but also welcomed by Lasdun. In the discussion with Peter Hall, in the director's question: '[w]hat's it going to look like in twenty years' time?', Lasdun asserts that the marks on the concrete will testify a change that is not only welcome but 'beautiful':

> Well, its [sic] going to weather. It's going to streak, and the streaks are going to have white patches, which they're already getting and which I think will be beautiful – don't forget that stone streaks. I want the concrete to weather so that in the end lichen grows on it and it becomes part of the riverscape. It will weather and become as though its and [sic] extension of the riverbanks. (Lasdun and Hall www)

Lasdun draws a parallel between the physical processes happening in natural materials – when stones covered with streaks because of rain for example – and the weathering of the building. The weathering of the carefully constructed concrete surface of his building, to the degree that 'lichen grows on it', does not terrify the architect – something that may scare a typical modern architect. On the contrary, the process of plants slowly growing on the concrete, which reminds us of algae growing on rocks and walls along the banks of the river, is desirable. In Lasdun's view, this will eventually unify the building and the riverscape (fig. 5.21, fig. 5.22). Thus, his building will be entirely integrated into the geographical morphology of the surroundings. Lasdun's approach to welcoming the prospect of nature taking over his architecture and accepting the marks of weathering, indicates his awareness of the inevitable effects of time on spatial forms: '[t]ime will make its marks of weathering. The building is placed in time but modifies time and moves in it' (cited in Amery: 13). His view implies an understanding of the vulnerability and impermanency of the architectural construction, but also how architectural formations dynamically transform through time. The relationship between space and time becomes evident through weathering.

Mohsen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow exemplify in their book *On Weathering* (1993) the inevitability of buildings' deterioration over time, which although may result in ruination, 'hardly an outcome desired by the architect, builder, or owner' (1993: 5), should be anticipated and even used productively. The marks and

stains that are considered to destroy the building's surface, and they may be regarded as 'a deviation from the original intention for the surface colour and texture' or as a result from 'a *fault* in the design', can also be seen as 'a new encounter between previously unrelated materials in one building sited in a particular place, they might also allow for a discussion of its harmony' (1993: 72, italics original). The deteriorating materials of buildings contest ideas related to permanence and endurance of architectural structures; they challenge the misconception that 'buildings persist in time' (Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow 1993: 5). Thus, we can say that when the effects of time on the National Theatre's concreteness become evident then the building loses its 'tightness'.

Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow call us 'not to see finishing as the final moment of construction but to see the unending deterioration of a finish that results from weathering, the continuous metamorphosis of the building itself, as part of its beginning(s) and its ever-changing "finish"' (1993: 16). Therefore, weathering can 'be the source of a great degree of unpredictability in the life of buildings after construction' (1993: 17). If we follow Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow's argument, the 'unfinished' National Theatre becomes complete through its endless transformation through time and weathering; whilst weathering brings unpredictability onto a rather defined and strict structure. The traces of time challenge the endurance and solidity of the concrete, and as a consequence the immovable and monumental qualities of the National Theatre, emphasising the temporality of the structure itself.

What Lasdun envisaged about the possible future decomposition of the building's exterior reminds us of Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey's art piece *FlyTower* (2007), in which the artists grew grass on the Lyttelton fly-tower surface. This artistic intervention, for which I will provide a brief discussion in a following section, might have been the only way to experience a view of the National Theatre becoming timeworn. However, signs of timeworn concrete are apparent on the 35-year-old construction's surface – rust staining, white marks, stalactite growth, which might have been created by exposed iron edges, over-heating lights, and a slow leak of water. These can be seen with a careful look at several places on the exterior, such as the stairs, the terraces' balustrades and sidewalls (fig. 5.23, fig. 5.24). But most of all the concrete transformation is manifested in the private face of the building with the

highlight of the Dressing Rooms' inner courtyard (fig. 5.25).[112] The white-grey dichromatic appearance of the courtyard's concrete is a significant witness of the years past since the building was raised and the priorities set on the building's preservation. Despite Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow's suggestion of looking at the encounter of materials as potentially creative, and Lasdun's vision of concrete's weathering, the National Theatre has not been left, and it will not possibly be left, to entirely weather or become timeworn, at least to the areas that are in public view.

As is reported to the Conservation Management Plan (2008) the external surface of the National Theatre has been lately cleaned (Haworth and Tompkins www: 140). The cleaning process has an explicit orientation as to where in the building it should be applied first and also it has to follow a technique that does not damage the carefully made board-marked concrete. Haworth and Tompkins architects consider the restoration of the concrete throughout the building for their future plan. They point out that '[a]ll maintenance and cleaning procedures should take utmost care not to damage the surface texture of the concrete, and should be carried out as infrequently as possible' (www: 142). However, the architects also have to confront the activity of graffiti that is a 'growing problem' (fig. 5.26, fig. 5.27) and which needs to be removed as soon as possible so to not encourage further 'attacks', even though this increases the danger of destroying the concrete's texture (Haworth and Tompkins www: 81). The architects report that the procedure followed until now has resulted in damaging the concrete (www: 140), and for that reason they are considering methods of cleaning that do not harm the exterior surface (fig. 5.28, fig. 5.29).

Despite the understandable sensitivity that the architects show for protecting the exterior of the National Theatre, the writing on the walls of the interior backspaces of the National Theatre, such as the wall at the backstage of the Lyttelton Theatre, is by no means considered to need cleaning. On the contrary, it forms a point of attraction during the Backstage Tour. When I attended the Backstage Tour, the guide showed us a black wall covered with words and drawings inscribed with white chalk. The notes are written between companies performing at the National Theatre and act as a proof of friendliness governing their backstage relationships. The inconsistency of the National Theatre towards the chalk writing happening on the interior walls of backstage spaces and the spray can of a graffiti artist happening in the public exterior,

[112] Part of the inner courtyard can be viewed through the windows of the Wardrobe room at Baylis Terrace in the southwest side of the building.

raises questions about the approach towards graffiti and in what context graffiti is considered as a threat or an attraction. [113]

The graffiti transgresses the borders of public and private space, creating a free passageway between inside and outside. By drawing on the walls of public buildings, graffiti artists transform the public space into a kind of personal space, a space that expresses their colourful taste. They establish the idea of 'free space' (Cresswell 1996: 47): the prevailing ideology of what a public space is and how it should be used is questioned. Cresswell, presenting and analysing the story of graffiti in New York City since 1971, offers a useful insight into the way graffiti can challenge preconceived ideas about the use of city-spaces:

> Graffiti also challenges the dominant dichotomy between public and private space. It interrupts the familiar boundaries of the public and the private by declaring the public private and the private public. Graffiti appears on the streets, the facades, the exteriors, that construct and articulate the meanings of the city. To the graffiti writer, everywhere is free space. The presence of graffiti denies the dominant divisions of meaning. The practice of graffiti by dominated groups makes claims upon the meaning of spaces; it utilizes the open, free quality of spaces that are not officially open. (1996: 47)

The graffiti's 'attack' on the exterior of the National Theatre distorts the meaning of the highly ordered design, which clearly defines the public and the private sections of the building. The distinction between private and public is greatly manifested at the design of the back (south-east) and front (north-west) of the building, and it is established by the discontinuation of the concrete. In the northeast corner of the building, where the service yard is also situated, the carefully made diagrid soffits, placed to the underside of the ceiling, stop and are replaced by plain concrete beams, whilst the walls are filled with brickwork instead of the painstaking marked-concrete. This modification of the exterior design pattern is clearly marked out with the outdoor twofold escape staircase, which divides vertically the whole exterior, signifying the

[113] It is worth noting that in the neighbouring building, in the Queen Elizabeth Hall's pilotis, graffiti artists have found shelter, among skateboarders and BMX bicycle riders. Since the early 1970s, graffiti artists and skateboarders – not only from South London, but also from across the UK – have been brought together, gradually shifting the aesthetically austere and rather unwelcoming undercroft of Queen Elizabeth Hall to a vibrant space that engages young people. Activities such as skateboarding and graffiti add to the South Bank area an informality that is essential for the space to feel alive and active, whilst the appropriation of this public space by young people questions the process of evaluation and decision making about the present and the future of sites. Although the performance of skateboarders and the expression of graffiti practitioners have become a distinctive feature of the South Bank and the popularity of their skatepark has a great impact on the South Bank's character, the future of the site is debatable (see Welch www).

boundaries of private and public space and the hierarchies of Lasdun's design (fig. 5.30).

Although the concrete assigns to the National Theatre's building its architectural identity, the exterior surface which is covered with brickwork and wraps the Workshop Block and rehearsal spaces holds a large percentage of the building's exterior. The almost unbroken face of the rear of the building and the distinction of the design between the waterfront and the south side, according to Curtis, are problematic since they produce a 'sense of exclusion' (1977: 24).[114] Furthermore, the separation of the carefully treated board-marked concrete, encircling the front of house, from the continuous brick walls manifests the privileged architecture of public spaces compared to less important architectural elements concerning private back areas of the building, confirming what Curtis notes about Lasdun's building 'its plan often indicates hierarchical distinction of functions' (1977: 52). The material becomes a tool for dividing the public and private areas. It is worth noting that the entrance of the most experimental of the three theatres of the National Theatre, the Cottesloe Theatre, is situated in Cottesloe Avenue, and finds itself on the threshold of these two materials (fig. 5.31, fig. 5.32).[115] Being placed in between the concrete large public spaces of the front of the building and the brick private workshop signifies in a way the practice of the experimental theatre that often seeks to challenge the borderline between production and spectatorship.

5.3 The terraces: thinking of architecture as urban landscape

> Every individual building will produce its own laws and it is those laws before anything else that an architect must understand and accept. *Lasdun* (cited in Curtis 1977: 54)

Denys Lasdun was greatly influenced by the modernist movement of architecture; however, he developed his own distinctive architectural style mainly based on the premise of 'architecture as urban landscape' (Curtis 1994: 80), which

[114] The blankness of the rear of the building is 'an unresolved issue in Lasdun's system' (1977: 24), as Curtis points out, and has been observed in other projects of his, such as Christ's College at Cambridge and the University of London.

[115] Apart from the fact that the Cottesloe provides a rather flexible space that is desirable from directors and companies that seek to develop experimental productions, another parameter that gives symbolic importance to this theatre space is that it is situated at the base of the main Olivier Theatre. Peter Hall says: 'I find this rather poetic – that space is like the foundation o [sic] the whole building, isn't it? You couldn't remove it, or the whole structure would collapse. It's siting there supporting the Olivier Theatre' (Lasdun and Hall www).

guided his architectural work. The design of his buildings is mainly characterised by horizontal architectural forms (terraces) that juxtapose with vertical elements of the structure (towers). This pattern reoccurs in different contexts in his projects over the course of time (see Curtis 1994). The horizontal outcrops function as platforms or routes that attempt to establish a visual or physical communication with the adjacent landscape (fig. 5.33). Through his design the architect intends to emphasise the openness of his building to the urban environment, whilst at the same time there is a clear objective to channel movement in and around the building.

The design and construction of the National Theatre is the distillation of Lasdun's architectural language, and it noticeably exemplifies the idea of architecture as urban landscape and the view 'that the individual building must be seen as an extension of its surroundings' (Curtis 1977: 52). During the long process of finalising the design and construction of the building, Lasdun continued evolving his own architectural vocabulary as well as he identified what was asked from the new building of the National Theatre; or, in other words 'what the building "should exemplify"' (Curtis 1977: 53). For Lasdun the National Theatre was first of all a building that belonged to the public, thus its design should support its 'openness' towards the city and its people. As Curtis puts it: 'Lasdun's solution stresses that a theatre is first and foremost a public building: a fragment of the public realm for performance, gatherings and celebrations, a place where dramatic experience is shared' (1977: 56). For serving this purpose the incorporation of strata into the exterior design was a defining device for the architect.

Strata is a geological term which Lasdun employed in order to describe the series of platforms that encircle his buildings: 'I call these terraces, which are very horizontal in emphasis, "strata" – it's a geological term that rather goes with concrete – and these strata are available to the public to just mill around in' (Lasdun and Hall www), he says.[116] Lasdun's device of strata was a key answer to his search to create a building that opens its premises to the public. For both of his designs followed the process of designing the National Theatre – the first in 1965, which also included an Opera House scheme in the site existing in front of Shell Tower, and the second in 1967 in the present site of the National Theatre – the strata theme emerged as an

[116] Curtis explains: '[t]he term 'strata' is the plural of the Latin word 'stratum', meaning 'level'. Lasdun's private use of the word seems to imply a building as a series of levels, an aesthetic stratification, landscape and geological analogies. Lasdun was certainly interested in rock formations in the mid-1960s, but did not start using the word 'strata' regularly until the early 1970s' (1994: 228).

essential element, in order to establish the required strong connection with the surroundings.

The function of the exterior design of the National Theatre, based on Lasdun's architectural practice of taking into consideration the uniqueness of the site and exploiting the surrounding landscape qualities, as well as his conceptual associations with the geological morphology, bring into mind qualities of Greek open-air theatres. The exploration of the cityscape in Lasdun's design, which resulted in the western inflection of the building and the creation of distinctive terraces that ask for communication with the urban setting, ascertain the design derived from the quality and singularity of the specific site. This attempted connection with the location holds a quality of the 'site-specificity' of the ancient Greek theatre. Lasdun's strategy of working *with* the surrounding environment and of incorporating its features into his design bears a similar process to ancient Greek theatres, which corresponded to the geological formations of nature. David Wiles explains:

> Greek theatres were modifications of the landscape rather than impositions, and Greek architects always built their theatres with attention to the view, unlike Romans who enclosed the audience within high walls. The audience on the slopes of the Athenian Acropolis had a fine view of the hills to the south-east, and a few at the top could also see the sea. Greek plays dealt with the limits of the human ability to control the world. Spectators sat inside the city they had created and looked at the wilderness beyond. From the security of their seats, they contemplate a world where nothing was secure. In tragedy the city was viewed in its relation to the wilderness beyond. (2000: 113-114)

In effect Lasdun aimed to design an open-air theatre whose stage finds itself in the city and which instead of staging a written play script, stages the modern drama of the city, using the city's built appearance as the setting and the inhabitants as the actors who are in tune with the rhythm of the city. As the architectural historian Colin Amery observes: '[i]n the same way that the Greeks manipulated their hillsides for theatres, Lasdun has manipulated a piece of cityscape into a building for drama' (1977: 69). Lasdun was a great admirer of the ancient theatre of Epidaurus, which he had visited with Peter Hall while he was in the process of designing the National Theatre and which explicitly inspired his design of the Olivier Theatre. In examining the theatre building and its relation to the urban landscape, the architect looks back to the ancient Greek theatres; the 70-year-old architect writes in 1984:

> To find a way through these problems we have to go back to the roots of architecture, to the forms of antiquity and their first full expression – and for me this means going back to the Greeks. They thought of their buildings in

> relation to the hills, the sea and the arch of the sky. The setting was as important as the building. The landscape – indeed the whole ambience – was inhabited by divine forces. At Epidauros, for instance, a splendid and exact geometrical composition is placed in a landscape that seems designed to receive it. Its radiant beauty springs from an elaborate system of responses, adjustments and correspondences in different parts of the auditorium. […] But the most subtle and significant adjustment of all is the increase of the radius of the Theatre by three and a half metres for the last two wedges on either side. This adjustment opens up the amphitheatre so that it can embrace the landscape and so that the City of Epidauros could form a living backdrop… The landscape was, in fact, one of the elements, with the city and the architecture, out of which Polycleitus could construct the theatre and out of which he could conjure its effect. (cited in Curtis 1994: 204)

Certainly the terraces, because of their division with concrete balustrades, their positioning in different levels of the building, which limits their access only through specific staircases, cannot possibly achieve the unification of the people to the degree it happens in the auditorium of ancient theatre of Epidaurus.[117] However, the unique characteristics of the site and its position within the urban hub affected Lasdun's design. The building becomes like a concrete hill in the riverside, the strata of which provide the essential grips and valleys for people to climb and enjoy the view of the city. Lasdun's terraces, overhanging towards the cityscape mainly at the western side of the building, intend to multiply the walkways and piazzas in the riverside and to merge theatre visitors with the public of the riverside (fig. 5.34). The strata provide a number of access points to the interior of the building – thus, entering the building does not necessarily entail crossing the main entrance of the theatre – whilst they function as routes not only for theatre visitors, but also for the general public, who can directly access the strata without entering the building.

One of the main achievements of the arrangement of the terraces in the exterior of the National Theatre is to make the river an asset, to 'give the Thames back to London' as Curtis observes: '[t]he pay-off on the river side of the theatre is certainly magnificent. The strata give the Thames back to London and indicate a possible civic solution for analogous sites elsewhere intent on exploiting the richness of their urban

[117] This is also a drawback of great significance that occurs in the Olivier Theatre's auditorium, where the stalls hang higher to the circle restricting their internal communication and controlling their use. The separation enforced between the audience zones is clear, definite and impossible to be negotiated. Wiles notes that whilst in the ancient Athenian Theatre '[t]he spectator 100 metres away was part of a single crowd, bonded by a space that created no vertical or horizontal boundaries, and concealed no group from the rest', in the 'pseudo-Greek' Olivier Theatre 'the commercial logic that divides cheaper seats from dearer ones undermines the power of the performance. The audience are not bonded because comfortable seats divide shoulders from shoulders and knees from backs, creating an individualized mode of viewing' (2000: 112).

context' (1977: 24). The strata invite the public to enjoy the river, the constantly moving water that traverses the city, and the built environment enveloping the river along its banks. Lasdun imagines that the movement of the audience is similar to the movement of the river. The people, like the water of the river, flood the inside and outside spaces of the theatre and as soon as the performance starts in the theatre stages they recede. The audience moving in and out of the National Theatre's stages follows the movement of the river's tides; the rhythm of the water dictates the 'rhythm of the building', he says:

> But the rhythm of the building is interesting, given that it's also by the river. Because I want the feeling that the audience - like the tides of the river flow into the auditoria and become a community within them. Then the tide ebbs and they come out into the creeks of the small spaces that are made by all these terraces; because they're not vast terraces they are very small, human little places for people to go to. (Lasdun and Hall www)

This rather poetic view of the building's function and the movement of people in its spaces, places the solid structure of the National Theatre in the context of a constantly changing landscape. Lasdun's image illustrates the meaning the architecture attains when it is conceived as part of people and surrounding movement and not as a permanent structure that remains unaffected by use and context. It is an architecture that considers the significance of flow in and around the built structures, or even the flow of the building's spaces themselves within the temporal characteristics and rhythm of their surroundings. Furthermore, Lasdun's viewpoint of how the temporal movement of the river water is involved in the building's rhythm provokes associations with the ephemerality of theatre performance. As a space is activated and transformed by a performance's action, rhythm and imagination, it is looked at anew each time a performance is presented in front of an audience, in the same way architecture should be able to accept the shifting movement of its users and built surroundings. Thus, architecture can become more responsive to the unforeseen and the improvised. Haworth and Tompkins architects comment on Lasdun's view:

> It is interesting that Lasdun employed such temporal terminology in imagining the spaces, enlisting the non-permanent and the ephemeral as essential counterpoints to the permanence of the built forms within a hierarchy of elements. In doing so he demonstrated an instinctive understanding that theatre space is by definition a provisional, shifting landscape – a constantly evolving 'community' of architecture and human interaction. (www: 28)

The strata device emphasises the function of the building as a public space but also the distinctive hierarchy in Lasdun's design, and they identify where the public space finishes and the private starts. The series of terraces signify the public face of the building towards the west, where they open up as large-scale platforms for people's gathering, whilst in places they become narrow and intimate resembling small balconies. The terraces extend the public zones of the National Theatre, whilst allowing the visitor to follow a range of routes in order to experience the building and enjoy the riverside view from a variety of perspectives and observe the urban drama.

5.3.1 The fourth theatre

For Lasdun the terraces alongside the foyers are the 'fourth theatre' of the building. Lasdun's view underlines the function of the building as a vibrant space that welcomes public and events, and his design attempts to embody the idea of the National Theatre as a building open to the public realm rather than an isolated worship space. The National Theatre has been considered as part of the city and the gathering spaces of strata and foyers intend to work in support of this premise:

> I feel that all the public areas of the building, the foyers and terraces, are in themselves a theatre with the city as a backdrop. The National Theatre is not a temple, and the policy of the company is that it should be a very open building. All kinds of events already happen in these parts of the building, wonderful rehearsals of 'Tamburlaine' on the terraces, kite-flying, music and people just gathering and meeting. The strata of the building are like new levels of ground and they will become real places. It is very important that the National Theatre becomes a part of the city. Any idea of a cultural ghetto has gone. (Lasdun 1977: 25)

The terraces serve to emphasise the communal aspect of theatre space and event; they are platforms for moving, gathering and socialising. Apart from acting as 'an extension of the city' (Curtis 1977: 52), which follows the rhythm of the city and the river, the strata becomes an extension of the theatres hosted under the National Theatre's roof. They function as urban auditoria from where the audience can attend the city performing and at the same time as collective stages where the audience perform their own movements, as Curtis puts it: '[t]he strata act as public stages and auditoria simultaneously' (1977: 52). On the terraces of the National Theatre the viewer obtains a panoramic view of the city; she/he witnesses the city's performance in the segment that stretches from St Paul's to Westminster. Lasdun's stepped landscape in the exterior of the building emphasises the connection of the theatre with

the city, by bringing forward manifestations of theatre praxis, which take place in public spaces of streets and squares:

> The theatre is part of the city, the city part of the theatre. Street and square were the earliest urban settings of drama and there is a return to street theatre when events occur (either planned or spontaneously) on the 'fourth theatre' of the strata. As levels of landscape they recall the earliest rural setting theatre – the side of a slope or a bank. (Curtis 1977: 56)

The use of terraces as performance spaces initiated since the opening of the National Theatre when Peter Hall rehearsed Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* on the terraces' platforms in August 1976. The play's premier was delayed because the construction of the Olivier Theatre had not finished. Therefore, apart from the rehearsals, Hall had also presented sections of the performance outside on the terraces free to passers-by before the production moved inside to the completed Olivier Theatre in October 1976 (Goodwin: 18-19). Another production that used the strata of the National Theatre as a stage in the early days of the National Theatre was Bill Bryden and Sebastian Graham-Jones' *The Passion*, based on the medieval Mystery plays, in 1977. The play's scene of *Crucifixion* was performed outside the National Theatre on Easter Saturday, before the completed production was presented in the newly opened Cottesloe Theatre (Goodwin: 19-20). The *Crucifixion* scene used the characteristic edge of the terrace above the 'anchor' stair that is aligned with the 45-degree axis of the building and which distinctively points towards Waterloo Bridge. *The Passion* evolved as part of the three-play circle called *The Mysteries* presented in the Cottesloe Theatre over the next eight years. After the last performance of the final part of *The Mysteries* in 1985 with the title *Doomsday* (Goodwin: 24), the whole production moved to the Lyceum Theatre and it was the first theatre performance presented there for more than 30 years.[118] The multiple layers of the outside space of the National Theatre – with their own rules and limitations, deriving from their defined geometry and their openness towards the urban setting – offer a range of possibilities for performance work. At the same time they expand the meaning of the theatre building itself, what should be expected from the exterior of the building, but also how the building can affect and

[118] The scenographer Pamela Howard in order to exemplify her position that 'alternative theatre design offers an escape from the illusions and confinements of conventional theatre space' notes that '[t]he outside terraces of the National Theatre were used to great effect in an early version of *The Passion*' (1989: 200), and the production carried 'its magic with it' when it moved to the old Lyceum Theatre (1989: 200).

widen the meaning of the theatre praxis.

The strata of the National Theatre have not only been used as a stage for theatre performances, but also as a built setting for the contemporary practice of parkour. In 2003, the National Theatre was one of the London landmarks that the free runners Jerome Ben Aoues, Johann Vigroux and Sebastien Foucan performed their parkour skills for the documentary *Jump London* directed by Mike Christie and produced by Mike Smith for Channel 4. The documentary follows the three French traceurs running and jumping selected rooftops around London. Among the fourteen locations were Trafalgar Square, Somerset House, Royal Albert Hall, The City of London School, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, Saatchi Gallery, HMS Belfast, Tate Modern and the National Theatre, as well as skateparks and playgrounds. The free runners had to physically discover the possibilities of each site, trace their route through the built elements, and plan and rehearse their movements. Their extraordinarily skilful movement, which includes jumps, rolling, suspension, balance, becomes even more impressive when the risk taken is greater. Thus, for example, it is breathtaking when they perform at the edge of a high-level rooftop or jump across a deep shaft.

We follow the three free runners through the landmarks of London, whilst their fast movement and the alternative routes they trace juxtapose with the prescribed route of tourists, the intensive walk of businessmen in the rush hour, the static theatre audience waiting in a queue, the seated customers of restaurants and bars and the slowly ‘dancing cranes’ in the background. The movements of the traceurs opposed to the movements of the city users; their speed, flexibility, their ability to move vertically and horizontally along and across the built structures make the viewer aware of the ordinariness of people’s movement throughout the city’s structures and open up the imagination to the possibilities hidden within the urban setting.

After the free runners run along the river, the Saatchi Gallery, and rooftops in Wardour Street in Soho, it is time for jumping the National Theatre. The scene opens showing people standing on the terraces, Johann Vigroux appears and jumps over the deep gap, 60 feet deep, at the top terrace, grips his body on the concrete balustrade of the semicircle staircase and jumps on it, goes down a few steps, and then jumps again over the shaft to reach the next terrace, twists his body over the handrail twice and the second time stays outside of the balustrade and he jumps down to the next terrace where he continues his running. In the interior of the National Theatre everything

seems like a normal evening, people go down the stairs, the foyer is full of people standing in the middle of the space or in front of the bar, leaning over the walls and sitting on the foyer seats looking at the foyer stage; they seem to ignore the free runners' presence. At the top level Sebastien Foucan walks calmly along the terrace, goes to the corner of the terrace, he clutches the balustrade, he slowly sways his body back and forth, he looks down, gradually bends his knees and lifts his body with silence and concentration up to the sky, as the dusk was falling. The next shot on is in the interior again where the runners jump over the balustrades, by using the concrete surfaces as a pivot point, they jump the stairs. At the same time as the audience is coming down slowly holding glasses of wine, the runners roll over the carpets and they continue running in the foyers.

Sebastien Foucan's stunning handstand was the highlight not only of the free runners journey through the National Theatre venue, but in the whole film. On the same axis of the National Theatre terraces where the *Crucifixion* scene had been presented, but on a higher level, Foucan's body stands vertically at the edge of the concrete strata like a vulnerable and temporary tower made of flesh, competing with the vertical structures of the fly-tower and the dome of St. Paul's cathedral in the background. The execution of the handstand, the degree of concentration he attains and the control of his body, looks like a meditation. The eyes of the viewer focus on the edge of the top terrace outside the Olivier foyer, where the 45-degree inflection of the building is visible; whilst the panorama of London's riverside from Waterloo Bridge to St Paul's cathedral is spread before Foucan's raised body. The director of the documentary, Mike Christie, characterises this scene as a 'defining moment of the programme'[119] and mentions that the view from this angle of the building was what Lasdun had in his mind when he designed the building.

John Langley, former manager of the National Theatre, states that the National Theatre has not always kept its activities on stages, but having the free runners in the National Theatre spaces was 'pretty much at the far edge' of what has been taken place at the National Theatre in the past. Apart from the free runners' extraordinary performance, Langley points out the importance the buildings attain through this practice: 'not only do you see what they do in an extraordinary way, they actually make you focus on the buildings in a strange way' and he continues to comment on

[119] *Jump London*, DVD (2003).

Foucan's handstand: 'to see that handstand you're just taking a view of London which you can walk past many times a day without really taking it out'.[120] Indeed, Foucan's body with the city in the background becomes the focus of the attention and offers a moment for reflection to the viewer about the city where she/he lives, whilst it also provokes viewers' imagination for alternative uses of city-spaces.

Parkour does not primarily use the 'leftovers' of the city, such as skateboarding for example, but structures that stand proudly in its middle, dictating their function and the appropriate use of them; it exists within the heavily built environment and within the frenetic rhythm of the urban setting. It does not need any other equipment to be performed, such as the wheels and the board of the skateboarders or the bicycle of the BMX riders, the well-trained body of the traceur is the main requirement. In the documentary, Borden claims that the free running is a 'pure form' of these activities, since it does not require equipment, and he suggests that 'free running could be the new urban activity for young men and women, perhaps older men and women, in the city'.[121] The performative actions are to an extent improvisational; however, intense preparation and training are demanded to ensure the excellent physical state of the practitioners and the execution of extremely challenging movements. Certainly, parkour is not just a sport or an athletic manifestation, but a lifestyle and its practitioners hold their own philosophy about their practice. With the strength and swiftness of their body traceurs defy the material elements of architecture with its confined paths, suggesting alternative trajectories. They travel through the dense urban environment, inscribing their unique route, overcoming the obstacles of the built structures, and connecting rooftops, railings, staircases, catwalks, poles, bollards. The restrictions of the concrete jungle do not hinder their free running, but make the free runners exceptionally inventive so as to find a way to move through and beyond them. In a way the restrictions of architectural elements become a condition, or an opportunity, for the parkour practice.

The documentary asks 'what is a city for?' and to this question the parkour practitioners respond by physically showing their own version of using and experiencing the city. Their response practically manifests what Lefebvre's argues: 'space does not consist in the projection of an intellectual representation, does not arise from the visible-readable realm, but it is first of all *heard* (listened to) and

[120] *Jump London*, DVD (2003).
[121] *Jump London*, DVD (2003).

enacted (through physical gestures and movements)' (1991: 200, italics original). Parkour challenges predetermined ideas about the function and purpose of the built environment, the way we move through the city, and how we experience urban architecture. It brings into focus the relation between buildings and the human body, their proportions, scale, openings, shapes, and it demonstrates the great potential of the use of urban space.

The architect Will Alsop welcomes this new practice and the way it uses the built environment and he states in the documentary that what he enjoys about parkour is that 'it's corrupting the original use' which was designed 'so carefully to perform a certain job'.[122] And he continues: 'we spend millions of pounds on building all this stuff. What else could that stuff be used for? That's the key question' and he pronounces 'I am sure there's all sorts of people waiting in the wings to come and corrupt our spaces in all sorts of different ways that we haven't even thought of yet'.[123] The parkour practice 'corrupts' the planned use and function of the buildings and widens the possibilities of using space. The free runners' bodies open the way to think about new uses of spaces, alternative routes within the complex built environment and even a different rhythm to experience the city. Parkour, alongside other performative urban cultural practices such as skateboarding and graffiti, through 'feeling and "unproductive" play' (Harvie 2009b: 67), suggests another way of experiencing city-spaces.

It seems that the distinctive concrete strata of the National Theatre, as well as the rundown signs of the building's appearance, made the building especially suited for the contemporary practice of free running. More recently, the first appearance of the international competition of free runners in London was hosted by the National Theatre on Sunday 20 March 2011. The competition, which is organised by Red Bull Art of Motion and was launched in 2007, calls free runners to compete in 'creativity, execution, flow and technical difficulty' (Red Bull Art of Motion London 2011 www). On that Sunday, I remember standing in the middle of the crowd outside the National Theatre waiting for the twenty-five free runners to descend the concrete terraces to the ground, and I looked around. People were flooding the terraces, the ground floor and overhanging themselves along the Waterloo Bridge's balustrade (fig. 5.35, fig. 5.36, fig. 5.37). Possibly Lasdun would have been content, if he could see his concrete

[122] *Jump London*, DVD (2003).
[123] *Jump London*, DVD (2003).

building being embraced by a sea of people and being used as an integral element of the performance of the young free runners. Possibly, this was a moment that materialised his vision of constructing a building open to the public and in dialogue with its urban surroundings. The audience saw the building's monumental exterior being 'violated' by free running practitioners for whom the surfaces of the building function no more than a series of platforms and levels that is critical for their practice. Competing with its surfaces and levels, the free runners questioned the building's monumentality and immobility, transforming it into a dynamic space that participates into the city's new practices. The concrete often characterised as unattractive exterior became less forceful and more animated.

To the strata designed to accept people was added the space in front of the main entrance of the National Theatre and it has been used as a stage for performance events. The space was given to pedestrian use when the road circulating around the building was taken away, as part of a series of considerable modifications in 1997. The architects Stanton Williams were charged with the renovation work of the National Theatre, whilst the National Theatre's director was Richard Eyre (Haworth and Tompkins www: 52). The accomplishment of the architects' proposal for removing the vehicular road around the building enhanced the circulation of the pedestrians on the street-level, achieving a better flow between the riverside walk and the building. Due to these modifications Theatre Square emerged in the north-western side of the building; a space for free summer entertainment which invites people to the outdoors auditoria of the National Theatre and expands the public paths and spaces in and around the building. Since it was first used in 1998 to host the *Watch This Space* festival, it has become a rather popular open-air venue during the summer. The audience gathers to attend for free open-air exhibitions, screenings, events and performances; 'there's something for pretty much everyone' is claimed on the leaflet of the festival (2008). The diversity of the festival supports and promotes a wide range of performances and aspires to attract a wide audience to the outside spaces of the National Theatre's building. Theatre, circus, dance, acrobatics, storytelling, music, cabaret, comedy, installations, film screenings, and workshops open to the audience, as well as residencies for companies are all part of the festival, which invites national and international, established or emerging artists.

The popularity of the festival enhances the function of Theatre Square, and the exterior of the building in general, as a public space. The festival brings colour to the

greyness of the concrete rock and its playful atmosphere is opposed to strict lines and angles of the structure (fig. 5.38, fig. 5.39, fig. 5.40). *Watch This Space* interrupts the formality of the theatre building and promotes a more relaxed way of enjoying a performance: 'Watch This Space is the playful side of the National, where we can let our hair down on the lawn and welcome a vast number of extraordinary artists to entertain us' stated the brochure of the festival in 2008 (Watch This Space www). The grass carpet is laid down on the Theatre Square's pavement and on Waterloo Terrace, the 'Armchair Theatre' – two giant armchairs and a sofa made of fake grass – are placed on the ground, white deck chairs and orange umbrellas are placed on the terrace and the space becomes ready to accept the audience gathering in the National Theatre's outdoor green living room.

Whilst Theatre Square increased people's visits and activities to the western corner of the building, it has at the same time emphasised the 'relatively dead area to the eastern side of the bookshop, where the service and delivery yard, bin stores and surface level car park are situated' (Haworth and Tompkins www: 52). The series of alternations, including the transformation of the space underneath the 'anchor' staircase, contributed to the isolation of the east side. The National Theatre has attempted to set in motion the east side of the building, where the entrance of the Cottesloe Theatre and the Stage Door are situated, inaugurating a second outdoor festival under the name *Square2*. Since 2008, *Square2* takes place on the Cottesloe Avenue by the Stage Door and on the eastern side of the bookshop (fig. 5.41). It presented two performances for two weeks when it was launched, the second year presented five performances over five weeks time, and in 2010 presented six productions for more than six weeks. In 2011, however, due to budget cuts *Square2* did not take place. The productions are mainly created by international companies and they are ticketed shows, offering priceless preview performances in which the audience sets the ticket price.

The alterations of the building made in 1997, alongside the launch of *Watch This Space* has increased the use of terraces by visitors during the summer months. However, throughout the year, the strata often remain underused, sizeable concrete platforms that stand mute and almost uninviting, and this possibly does not rescue them from being often associated with dull car parks (Curtis 1977: 24). In the Annual Report of the National Theatre in 2007/8, the National Theatre Board identifies that besides the changes that have made, the underused strata are still an issue: '[t]he

National's terraces were a blank canvas which, to some extent, and for all their wonderful position overlooking the Thames, they still are' (NT Annual Report 2007/8: 11). The downside of the terraces being 'a blank canvas' attains a greater importance, in the view of the fact that the flow of walkers in the riverside pathway has been dramatically increased, as we have seen, making the terraces seem even more neglected.

From the point of view of the architectural design there are specific reasons that the strata remain underused (fig. 5.42). First, the strata are not as easily accessed from outside because the points of entry are not easily read by the visitor. The ambiguous visual connection between their platforms and the riverside walk discourages the visitor from climbing up to the concrete rock of the building's exterior. The strata's connections with the Queen's Walk through the 'anchor' staircase, with Waterloo Bridge through a walkway, and with the South Bank complex through a mid-level tunnel do not act as sufficient points of entry. Also, the strata remain underused because even when the visitor has accessed the terraces, their appearance seems austere. There is a lack of colour, the planting area is inadequate, the paving is damaged in places, the metal fixed furniture 'appears institutional and unwelcoming' (Haworth and Tompkins www: 132). The ill-maintained surfaces of the terraces, the fixed pieces of furniture and the conspicuous barriers that stop the circulation around the building exterior are not in favour of the function of terraces as open and welcome. Activating the strata constitutes on of the central goals of the Conservation Management Plan, which apart from exploring possibilities for 'further greening the terraces, avoiding formal arrangements' (Haworth and Tompkins www: 132), it proposes to improve the vertical access and circulation in the exterior and create new junctions with the surrounding urban landscape.

5.4 The fly-towers

The vertical elements of the Olivier and Lyttelton's fly-towers, alongside the horizontal elements of the terraces bestow on the building its distinctive character. The Olivier's fly-tower, by being inflected towards the Waterloo Bridge, seeks communication with the cityscape towards the west. The Lyttelton's fly-tower, smaller in scale and closer to the bridge and the arts buildings of the Hayward Gallery and BFI, 'acts as a sort of point of stasis' (Lasdun and Hall www), supporting the transition from the Olivier's fly-tower to the level, volume and shape of the

surrounding riverside buildings. The existence of the two fly-towers reveals the storage space of the National Theatre's main theatre stages. The fly-towers are the visible shells that cover the flies, which are situated above the theatre stages and which are available for lifting the scenery, props or even in some cases actors from the stage. This functional space, which acts as a backspace and is hidden in the building's interior, becomes the central vertical architectural element of the building's exterior. The disclosure of the inside arrangements of a building on its exterior design is a model that has typically materialised in brutalist architecture. In brutalism the interior layout has determined to a degree the outside design of the building, by emphasising the functional elements of buildings, instead of concealing their existence.

The external surfaces of the National Theatre's fly-towers act as screens, where colour lighting is projected.[124] The illumination of the walls and columns highlights the rough texture of the concrete surface, giving to the pale grey colour of the exterior a sense of warmness. The changing colour of the lighting is visually very effective, since it makes the architectural elements of the building to perform in different ways from night to night, and the building is re-introduced every night to the cityscape (fig. 5.43, fig. 5.44). Apart from the fact that the lit architectural elements announce the National Theatre's building to night sky, the lit surfaces become a platform where the energy efficient technology is celebrated. In 2007, the National Theatre replaced the exterior conventional floodlights with low-energy LED lights, supported by a five-year partnership with Philips (NT Annual Report 2007/8: 13, 29).[125] This has significantly contributed to the decrease of energy consumption since 2006; in 2009-10 the percentage of energy savings in electricity and gas reached 25% (NT Annual Report 2009/10: 17, 56).[126]

In view of climate change as an important contemporary issue, the pursuit of environmental sustainability is vital, and theatre has a central role to play being a public space and being often a large consumer. In 2008, in The Theatres Trust conference titled 'Building Sustainable Theatres', which took place at the Cottesloe Theatre, architects, consultants, technicians, artists and representatives of many well-

[124] Queen Elizabeth Hall has started following the same strategy in lighting. This connects the two cultural institutions across the Waterloo Bridge at night.
[125] The National Theatre and Philips Partnership won the Environment Award of Hollis Sponsorship Awards in 2010 (Butler (April 2010) www).
[126] The goal achieved in 2008-09 as concerns the reduction of gas and electricity consumption was 19%, taking 2006 as a benchmark (NT Annual Report 2008-09 www: 39). In June 2008, the reduction was 18% in gas and 10% in electricity (NT Annual Report 2007/8 www: 13).

known theatre spaces, such as the Arcola Theatre, the Barbican, the National Theatre, the Southbank Centre, the Birmingham Rep, gathered in order to discuss theatre buildings' sustainability. They sought ways through which theatres can become environmental friendly, reduce their carbon footprint and energy consumption. The power of theatre to influence society and its role of bringing awareness to the public about environmental issues was highlighted.

Nigel Hinds, Chair of the conference, suggested that theatre should 'use this influence now, championing the role of sustainable practices in creating a healthier and fairer global environment' (The Theatres Trust www: 5). He pointed out the ability of theatre to transmit complex messages and its potential to become an example to the public. He said: 'theatre makes visible the invisible and the complex. From how it conveys its messages to how it manages its buildings, theatre sets a powerful example to the public at large' (The Theatres Trust www: 5). The National Theatre, through the distinctively lit fly-towers, becomes one of these examples in the city. Its colourful fly-towers announce the building's sensibility in environmental issues and remind the city of the necessity of pursing a greener environment. The new technology LED lighting was the beginning of the National Theatre's strategy of managing energy consumption and costs. At the same time more ways of reducing consumption and carbon footprint are examined and included in the theatre's Master Plan.[127] The lit fly-towers indicate the launch of theatre's approach to generate an energy efficient building, contributing to environmental sustainability.

Additionally, the lighting of the building increases the building's permeability during night (fig. 5.45, fig. 5.46). The lighting permits the stretch of the interior illumination to the outside coffered roofs, dissolving the border line between inside and outside, thus, the building becomes more transparent compare to the daytime. The exterior dramatic lighting transforms the grey and almost unfriendly exterior to a colourful warm platform that expects and highlights people's presence. The glass windows and doors let the passer-by catch a glimpse of the design as well as the activity in the interior, which is especially intense before and after a performance or during the intervals, when people's figures can be discerned. Warm colours of floodlights, similar to the ones used to light the theatre stage, light the interior. At

[127] In order to realize a greater degree of environmental sustainability, the National Theatre has started promoting a recycling policy of waste and water (see NT Annual Report 2007/8 www: 13). And also within the strategy for a greener NT, alteration are made to the car park, the loos, heating system, using recycling paper for the productions' programme (see Butler 2010 www).

night the building becomes porous and performs its openness towards the cityscape. It becomes an inviting space that discards something from its monumental character; it obtains the desirable accessibility and aliveness that verify the building's function as an open public space. Curtis observes:

> At night, of course, the edges dissolve away to reveal the coffered undersides of the strata (a 'diagrid' structure) hovering into the interiors where people move about. The result is a monument that is also a non-monument – a building that splices together hieratic formality with a deliberate openness and availability. (1994: 135-6)

The cubic fly-tower of the Lyttelton, except for being one of the architectural elements of the building lit by the LED lighting, has been also used as a screen where large video or photographs are projected on. Thus, for example, during *Watch This Space* in 2010, a collection of films from the BFI archive were projected on Lyttelton's fly-tower transforming Baylis Terrace into an open-air cinema (fig. 5.47, fig. 5.48). In addition, the fly-towers act as a billboard for advertising the National Theatre, during night, where the 'NT' feature is projected on their walls. The Lyttelton's fly-tower also announces the Travelex tickets, a strategy launched in 2002, by projecting a sizeable feature of £12 on Lyttelton's fly-tower – an attempt to encourage audiences to attend National Theatre productions with low price tickets.

Apart from using the fly-towers as a screen, since the '80s a large electronic billboard – reminiscent of the dot matrix boards in airports – stands on a high level at the northwest side of the building in front of the basis of the Olivier's fly-tower. In 2009, the billboard participated in the National Theatre's attempt to reduce energy consumption. The 1248 light bulbs used for the teletext were replaced by 'the Philips VidiWall, an 8m x 3m screen using LEDS, or light-emitting diodes' (Butler 2010 www), contributing to energy savings, by reducing CO2 by 30 tonnes per year. The scrolling text of the screen broadcasts, apart from the new plays presented, a blend of messages: the Travelex sponsorship, the partnership with Philips, the mission of the National Theatre to reduce energy consumption, the local time, temperature and even the wind speed. It is a meeting point of all the signs that define the National Theatre's function and vision, and the city's present. It attempts to connect the building with the city, weather and time.

The external architectural elements of the building, however, have not just been panels for announcements, but a source of inspiration and a co-participant in art projects. In May 2007 the exterior of the building became part of two art pieces,

FlyTower by Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey, and Antony Gormley's sculptures. Gormley placed two statues at the top of the building; one on the Lyttelton fly-tower and another upon the roof of the Olivier foyer. Both of them were situated at the most privileged edges of the building, following the logic of the architecture of the building that emphasises the west side. Similarly, in Ackroyd and Harvey's *FlyTower*, the north and west sides of the Lyttelton's fly-tower were chosen to become the platform of their artwork. The artists planted almost 2 billion seeds of grass on the two vertical surfaces of the fly-tower that sprouted, grew and withered. The two sides of the fly-tower were considered more important than the south and east sides, since the south and east sides have less impact on the riverside walkway and the Waterloo Bridge.[128]

Gormley's sculptures were part of the larger project *Event Horizon*, which was commissioned by the South Bank Centre to mark the occasion of the Royal Festival Hall's re-opening.[129] His concept *Event Horizon* sought to attract people's attention to the built environment and attempted to dissolve the boundaries between art and life. The statues were not exhibited in the protected space of a gallery, but in the open-air spaces of the city. The 31 fiberglass and cast-iron figures, standing across the South Bank, depicted life-size naked bodies, for the formation of which the artist had used his own body as a model. The statues, which were positioned at the edge of rooftops of well-known buildings, at footpaths across the South Bank and Waterloo Bridge, gazed at the horizon of the cityscape and mingled with the people on the ground. By being exhibited in public spaces of the city, Gormley's artwork intended to bring awareness of the dense and overpopulated urban environment. The artist had envisioned figures to occupy the built environment of London as if it was 'a natural landscape': '[t]he idea was to somehow introduce these life-sized figures into the topography of London as if it were a natural landscape, as if it were mountains against the sky' says Gormley (BBC News 2007 www).

Gormley's sculptures and Ackroyd and Harvey's *FlyTower* coincided with concerns to their concepts and intentions, as well as the meaning they inscribed on the

[128] This was also evident in the lighting of the National Theatre during night until recently, when the north and west sides fly-towers used to be lit. At present, the fly-towers are lit in all four directions, indicating a change in the attitude towards what considers to be back and front, and the relationship with the city, and signifying the response of the National Theatre towards the city's changes.

[129] In some cases, the accidental encounter with the outline of the human figures at the top of the buildings has provoked such puzzlement and uncertainty to the public that the statues were mistaken for inhabitants in an attempt to jump into the vacuum (see BBC News (16 April 2010) www, and Bone www).

built structure of the National Theatre. From different perspectives, both of the artworks sought to emphasise the importance of the environment and magnified issues that arise in the built space of the city. The grass-grown concrete rock of the National Theatre became a metaphor of a man-made city that neglects the quality of life and needs of its inhabitants, and which ignores the value of green spaces in the city. The withered grass also acted as a reminder of processes that take place in nature and the life-cycle, which should be also considered in relation to the built structures.

FlyTower was commissioned by the National Theatre, supported by Artsadmin and sponsored by Bloomberg. Ackroyd and Harvey have been working together since 1990 and their artwork, mainly sculpture and photography, involves architecture and science; their approach focuses on ecological issues and climate change (see Ackroyd and Harvey www). Their work includes expeditions to the Arctic joining the Cape Farewell organisation, and examining the effects of global warming and climate change on the ecosystem. Their time-based practice of covering architectural elements with grass is also known by their creating of green covers inside the derelict church Dilston Grove in Bermondsey in 2003. Natural processes are evident in their work, as well as themes of erosion and extinction. Their practice attempts to raise awareness of environmental issues, such as the dangers of global warming, as well as the disappearance of greenery in the built environment.

The *FlyTower* project seems to have sprung from the interior experimental stage of the National Theatre's Cottesloe Theatre. Katie Mitchell, associate director of the National Theatre, who directed Caryl Churchill's adaptation of August Strindberg's playtext *A Dream Play* for Cottesloe in 2005, asked the artists: '[h]ave you ever thought about growing the Lyttelton fly tower?' (Sooke www). Mitchell, was inspired by Agnes's words that open Strindberg's play: '[l]ook how the tower's grown' (Strindberg: 5). The artists, though, had thought about growing not only the fly-tower but the whole theatre even before Mitchell's suggestion, when they used to pass outside the theatre: '[w]e used to get the 59 bus across Waterloo Bridge to Brixton, which is where we were living' Ackroyd says; '[w]e joked about growing the whole building', Harvey adds (Sooke www). Strindberg's phrase triggered a performative expression not for the stage, but for the exterior of the building. As Robert Butler observes it is often expected for 'the first line of a play to have an impact on a theatre audience' but not 'to have an impact on the building itself' (Butler 2007 www), which was the case for *FlyTower*.

The large-scale project – although covering only half of the fly-tower with grass the surface was more than 750 square meters – demanded 16 people assisting for more than two tons of clay to be spread on the two surfaces of the fly-tower. For the completion of the work a 10-storey scaffolding was required and the seeds had to be planted into the clay when this was damp. The coordination of the small groups of assistants was particularly important to achieve the required quality of the clay, its application on the site and the insertion of the germinated seeds into the wet clay. Apart from the mixture of the clay and the coordination of the team worked another central parameter that could define the success or failure of the outdoor project was the weather, since '[a] torrential thunderstorm could send their meticulous work sloshing down towards the Thames' (Sooke www). Additionally the artists had to deal with the need to water the seeds, since there was typically no prediction for a water source upon Lyttelton's fly-tower. Although Lasdun had envisioned his building as a lively space that could accept events attracting the public, the case of the fly-tower itself being part of an art installation was probably far from being foreseen. Consequently, for *FlyTower,* the artists had to pump the ground water gathered in the basement, which was poured through the pipes to sewers. This was the start of the ground water being used in other areas and facilities of the National Theatre's building, contributing to saving water within the wider strategy of energy saving of the National Theatre.

In the time-based installation of *Fly-Tower*, the concrete cubic fly-tower was transformed into a vertical green lawn. The uncompromising concrete volume of Lasdun's fly-tower became 'a beacon of green, a reminder of rolling fields in the midst of the city' (Sooke www). The blades of grass grew and withered, endowing the fly-tower with a spectrum of green to yellow-brown colour over the course of time. Passers-by attended the natural process of the grass through the course of five weeks, until the life cycle of the grass was completed and it was finally removed leaving again bare the grey Lyttelton's concrete fly-tower. The ephemerality of the art piece is not an easy task for the viewer: '[i]t's never easy to see a piece degrade', Ackroyd states, '[i]t's always slightly disturbing' (Sooke www). This response is enhanced when a comparison with the solid and sizeable structure of the National Theatre is attempted. The passage from grass to disappearance in a short few weeks, in relation to the immovable concrete edifice, which assures its long presence – it was already 31 years old when *FlyTower* was presented – juxtaposed the ephemeral performative actions and the stability sought through architecture. It directly brought into a dialogue

nature and built environment, monumentality and temporality, space and time.

5.5 The contradictory exterior of the National Theatre

The opposing tendencies of durability and temporality, porosity and imperviousness, openness and firmness, movement and stasis are in conflict on the National Theatre's monumental exterior. Despite Lasdun's intention to create a space open to the public, the monumental qualities of the building have not been considered as fully inviting. The undoubtedly admirable geometry of the building, a result of a painstaking designing process, but also the meticulous application of concrete have both contributed to the building's complexity. The endurance of the concrete material and the strict geometry of its exterior reinforce those attitudes that see the National Theatre as falling into the category of a fossilised theatre space.

On the one hand, the large horizontal elements of strata, especially in the northwest side, counterpoint the verticality of fly-towers and introduce a dialogue with the surrounding cityscape, indicating the importance of the communal experience. On the other hand, the clear geometrical volumes of the imposing fly-towers attempt to announce the presence of National Theatre within the surrounding landscape. The raw concrete signifies the value of denying the meaningless ornamentation and futile excess, and calls for recognition of the essential. It also donates to the theatre its strong presence within the city; as we have seen, Peter Hall called upon the National Theatre's solid structure to support National Theatre's central role and durability within the realm of country's culture. However, the material itself is primarily the reason for the building's 'tightness' and its overall lack of permissiveness and porosity.

The contradictions evident in the National Theatre's architecture testify that Lasdun's building seems to have stood in-between two tendencies. He intended to create a building with a distinctive and unique design, on the one hand, and on the other hand, to create a space that is inviting and open to the city and its people. Lasdun's design clearly manifests what the architects Steve Tompkins and Andrew Todd assert: '[t]wentieth century architects consistently struggled to reconcile the apparently conflicting demands of great architecture and great theatre' (2007: 32). Lasdun attempted to reconcile the ideas of a public building, which could accept a large number of people and facilitate a variety of performance expressions, and of a building that keeps its hierarchical and ceremonial aspects.

Certainly, the conflict of the two different agendas was heightened because of the historical moment that Lasdun built the National Theatre. At the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s in western theatre, there was an increasing request from theatre practitioners for changing the traditional layout of theatre buildings and even to move completely away from it. Thus, they looked for alternative spaces that could facilitate performances, and which could support practitioners' objectives for immediacy with the audience and suspension of conventional theatre barriers. I will give some examples of theatre spaces that have challenged traditional theatre edifices in the following section. Apart from the changes happening in theatre, there were significant changes happening in architectural practice. The beginning of the 1970s was the beginning of a fierce criticism of modern architecture and its ideals, and which led to the rise of postmodern tendencies in architecture. As Curtis notes, '[t]he National Theatre arrived at a moment when there was a strong ideological ground swell against modern architecture from several directions simultaneously' (1994: 230). The attempt of the building to settle 'the unpopular questions of rhetoric and monumentality as well as the public definition of theatre' (Curtis 1977: 56) provokes questions about the role of theatre and its purpose, as well as what kind of theatre architecture is suitable for theatre experience.

Michael Elliott's talk on the Third Programme of BBC Radio in 1973 stood against the National Theatre's imposing architecture even before the building was finished. Elliott, who was also a member of the Building Committee for the National Theatre, was opposed to 'inflexible, hard-to-demolish buildings' (1995: 19) for theatre. Although he approves that '[w]e *need* the big regional theatres […] as the cornerstones of a national pattern' (1995: 19, italics original), he askes for appreciation of 'the importance of more transitory operations and of less permanent buildings' (1995: 19-20). Elliott pronounced to 'stop building for posterity' (1995: 17) and he directly linked the architectural form of the theatre building with the function of theatre itself. For him the 'heavy and permanent' theatres lead to complex and inflexible organisations and institutions (1995: 19). Elliot – having himself envisaged the Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre, to which he refers as 'almost a theatre' (1995: 20) – claimed that the audience 'would find more interest and excitement in less conventional surroundings […] [t]ents, halls, gardens, rooms, warehouses' rather than places such as the National Theatre (1995: 20). He believed in the joy, informality, freedom and power of less conventional theatre spaces and he suggested

that ‘new civic theatres need to retain some of the joy and freedom’ (1995: 20) that non-traditional theatre spaces hold.

On the other end of spectrum the architectural critic Curtis, responded to criticisms against the National Theatre’s building by asserting that they were largely based on preconceptions about what a monument is and how it functions: ‘[t]he theatre is a monument and at present monuments are regarded with suspicion in England – as if they were dinosaurs from a previous age or the products of *prima donnas* intent on self-aggrandisement’ (1977: 8, italics original). The qualities of the building, its texture and size act as a drawback for those who desire the ‘petite’ and the ‘vernacular’; as Curtis asserted: ‘[t]he National Theatre is big, forceful and made of concrete when the prevalent ethos requires the petite, the anonymous and the vernacular, no matter what the building task’ (1977: 8).

The idea of monumental theatre buildings becomes problematic for the function of theatre, its place within the city and its connection with people. Lefebvre argues that monumentality, beyond its intention to embody collective expression, signifies ‘the will to power’ (1991: 143). Thus, the monumental exterior of a theatre edifice can minimise the impact of the concept of theatre as a democratic space, a space which is open and inviting for the wider public.[130] It bestows on theatre the notion of being a place of authority in which audience feels having no authorship, thus, part of the public becomes distant to its purpose. Being intimidated, or discouraged, is the beginning of the gap between theatre edifice and audience. A central factor that a monument attains its power, apart from its scale and physical appearance, is time. As Lefebvre asserts: ‘[t]he most beautiful monuments are imposing in their durability. A cyclopean wall achieves monumental beauty because it seems eternal, because it seems to have escaped time. Monumentality transcends death, and hence also what is sometimes called the “death instinct”’ (1991: 221). And he directly associates the durability of the built structure with power: ‘[w]hat, after all, is the durable aside from the will to endure? Monumental imperishability bears the stamp of the will to power’ (1991: 221). Certainly the issue of time and its connection with built structures, to which I will return in the following section, is fundamental in architecture in general, but it becomes even more distinctive when the building is a

[130] McAuley observes the ambivalent relationship between theatre and power, and the disempowerment of the audience encountering a monumental theatre building (see McAuley 2000).

prominent figure in the cityscape and serves the public, such as the National Theatre does.

Despite its monumental characteristics, the signs of weathering on the building's concrete exterior, which Lasdun expected as indicators for the incorporation of his design into the landscape, manifest the inevitable interconnection of the built structure with time. The timeworn materials of building's parts, such as the balustrades, the terraces' paving, destabilise the building's claim to permanency and testify to the inescapable effects of time and use. At the same time, the building certainly offers a range of opportunities for people's involvement. It has the potential to be transformed and host events beyond its stages, by exploiting its scale, material and architectural choices and style. The concrete exterior levels of the building have become opportunities for artistic interventions and performative actions. As we have seen, the exterior vertical and horizontal surfaces of the building have been the inspiration and 'stage' for a variety of contemporary performance practices, such as installations, parkour events and open-air festivals.

The emergence of these practices in Lasdun's 'fourth theatre' challenges views such as this of David Wiles, who argues that Lasdun's 'sixties design […] perforce no longer offered a "contemporary" view of society by the time the theatre opened in 1976 […] he did not create a space that later generations could easily modify and revitalize' (2003: 265). In fact, the National Theatre's strata has been the ideal space for lately invented practices, such as this of free running that is tightly connected with the contemporary city's built environment. The fly-towers have been the receivers of the late technology of energy efficient lighting and their distinctive pallet of colours calls the city's people for environmental awareness, which constitutes a central issue at the present time. Also, the 'vertical authority' of the fly-towers has been destabilised by the projects such as the *FlyTower* artwork where nature took over their concrete surfaces.

The National Theatre is certainly a contradictory building. Despite the problematic issues deriving from its monumental qualities, it provides opportunities for performative actions, events and installations which enhance the relationship between theatre building, audience and the city. How these practices affect the building's design is particularly important in view of the future alterations of the National Theatre. The examination of the building's architectural elements and the spatial practices occurring in its spaces provide a way of understanding the building

and thinking of its future alterations as a way of diminishing the monologues of its monumental aspects and increasing the dialogical aspects of its architecture.

5.5.1 Some reflections on theatre and non-theatre space

In the period that the National Theatre was underway, theatre practitioners, discarding the idea of a monumental theatre edifice, sought spaces that provided flexibility and which were uncharged of institutionalised structures. Thus, in the early 1970s Richard Schechner chose a former metal stamping factory (The Wooster Group www), named The Performing Garage, to shelter his theatre group and develop his views on environmental theatre (see Schechner 1994) alongside the theatre designers Brooks McNamara and Jerry Rojo (see McNamara et al. 1975).[131] Ariane Mnouchkine chose a former industrial space that could be transformed to accommodate the needs of each production. As McAuley observes Mnouchkine 'always expressed a strong preference for a theatre space that provides shelter with minimal formal constraints', and 'refused all offers to direct prestigious national theatres and has remained faithful to the Cartoucherie, the eighteenth-century munitions factory that she obtained in 1970' (McAuley 2000: 38). Peter Brook chose an abandoned and practically ruined theatre to establish his theatre base in the 1970s. Brook's Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord (see Todd and Lecat 2003), which has been an inspiration for theatre practitioners, designers and architects, has kept the qualities of a found space, whilst its decay, 'the fading colours and crumbling plasterwork' (1989: 200) suggest the idea of a theatre 'under erasure' (1989: 200), as Carlson distinctively says. Brook's production *Mahabaharta* in 1988 was also the reason for rescuing from demolition and transforming a nineteenth century tram shed in Glasgow (see Wallace 1995). The space was converted into the Tramway theatre in 1990, and since then it has become a well-recognised venue for contemporary performance and visual art.

In contemporary London, performance groups such as Shunt found shelter in the cavernous spaces underneath London Bridge station;[132] Punchdrunk, as we saw in the second chapter, have regularly adopted abandoned spaces for creating their

[131] However, The Performing Garage, the space that supported renowned avant-garde theatre work, according to Knowles, is 'now the fashionably downscale venue for the movie stars and others that constitute the Wooster Group' (Knowles 2004: 155).

[132] The Shunt Lounge took place in London Bridge vaults for the period 2004-2010 (see Shunt www). It is worth noting that Shunt, as well as Punchdrunk, have been supported by the National Theatre. For example, Shunt's production *Tropicana* in 2005 (see National Theatre, Tropicana www) and Punchdrunk's *Faust* (2006-2007).

performance. Experimental theatre structures, such as The Jellyfish Theatre which was made entirely from salvaged material and operated as a theatre venue in Southwark, during the summer 2010 (see The Oikos Project www), apart from making evident the temporality of theatre building, indicate the value of recycling and signpost the necessity of theatre buildings' sustainability in response to alarming environmental issues.

The fact that, since the last century, theatre practitioners have sought alternatives for hosting their work and have looked for audience engagement in non-theatrical spaces has challenged theatre architecture. As the architects Tompkins and Todd claim performance practices in alternative spaces render 'specialised theatre architecture redundant' (Tompkins and Todd 2007: 32). Tompkins and Todd in their article 'The Unfinished Theatre' associate the movement of theatre practitioners towards unconventional theatre spaces with the lack of satisfactory theatre architecture. They state: '[i]n the absence of convincing new paradigms from the great twentieth century architects, the theatre, almost uniquely, has seen its own practitioners […] taking the initiative in the debate around architectural space' (2007: 32). They bring examples of prominent modern architects, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Kahn, Alvar Aalto, and Le Corbusier, to demonstrate the inability of modern architecture to accept the unexpected that occurs through time and spatial use. They specifically say: '[t]he great Modernist creators of space seem to have been temperamentally unsuited to making buildings that should serve as incomplete, responsive vessels for other creators to fill' (2007: 32). The movement of theatre practitioners away from established theatre edifices is largely connected with the inability of modern architecture to create theatre spaces responsive to time. As Tompkins and Todd state: 'a general shortcoming of the architecture of the last 100 years that is of particular relevance to theatre design: [is] its reluctance to engage with time' (2007: 33).

It is particularly essential to look at the relationship of theatre building and time, since time is inherent to theatre practice. As Peggy Phelan argues that performance comes into being only in the present and she claims that a performance cannot be repeated: 'performance occurs over a time which will not be repeated' (1993: 146). Once an attempt is made for a performance's reproduction then it 'betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology' and as she characteristically puts it: '[p]erformance's being […] becomes itself through disappearance' (1993: 146). Theatre buildings that claim their permanency and fixity come into contrast to the

temporality of the theatre practice itself. The exploration of the relationship between theatre architecture and time is an imperative since the built construction should acknowledge and enhance the function of theatre as a temporal practice. Reflecting on Carlson's observation about the persistence of the theatre building as an architectural object (1989: 6), McAuley observes the paradox of performance ephemerality and of a building's permanency: 'it is somewhat ironic that the most ephemeral of art forms should leave behind such obvious and durable traces of its presence' (2000: 37), she says.

Tompkins and Todd find themselves in front of this issue; they say: '[i]f the theatrical mindset draws its charge from conditions of instability and impermanence, shouldn't theatre architects be attempting to suppress the ingrained urge towards permanence and full resolution?' (2007: 33). Theatre buildings that fail to respond to performance's impermanent nature, that seek to freeze time and disconnect time from space proclaiming space's permanent and unalterable presence, become problematic in their attempts to inspire practitioners and engage with the temporal nature of theatre. How can, then, the theatre building achieve to bond with what Till calls 'thick time'? That is, an 'expanded present' as Till defines it (2009: 95). Physical space should be imagined as open and porous so to incorporate change, improvisation and initiation. The conception and materialisation of buildings should be considered as 'unfinished and open' (Massey 2005: 107). The degree to which architecture accepts time as an ingredient of buildings' design determines the degree to which possibility and openness occur.

The qualities that alternative spaces offer – such as, diversity, informality, flexibility – should be carefully considered in relation to conventional theatre spaces. This may allow us to imagine and invent possible spatial configurations and practices that enhance audience experience within theatre buildings. The architectural theoretician Dorita Hannah, examining the relationship between theatre edifices and 'found' spaces, suggests that architects 'need to look at the qualities of these "found" sites and how they can re-inform performance space' (Hannah and Horešovská www). The particular qualities of found, unconventional or transformed spaces, as have been discussed throughout this thesis, can form a paradigm for theatre architecture that wishes to challenge the established architectural practices and that seeks effective ways to communicate with the audience and the city.

In the case of theatre spaces, the restrictions or the opportunities that the built structure produces are even more apparent than other built structures. This is because theatre spaces receive the public view, participate directly in the audience experience and act as generators for ideas, imagination, creativity and engagement in relation to performance practices, but also practices occurring in city-spaces. An architecture that ignores people's presence, desires, choices and freedom makes problematic the relationship of theatre, audience and the city. In the present theatre scene, where theatre has flowed into the city – by performances taking over leftover or found spaces – there is the need for theatre edifices to find ways that will allow the reverse flow as well: the city's circulation through permanent theatre structures. By this I mean, to create theatre spaces that acknowledge the constant changing cityscape and which offer possibilities for transient expressions and experiences. The meaning and function of theatre buildings need to be re-considered in terms of buildings' relationship with the contemporary city and the degree of their responsiveness to contemporary performance practices. The connection of the physical presence of theatre building with the city needs to be re-defined, so as to reflect the transient nature of theatre practice and the continuously changing formation of the city.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have discussed the meanings of urban space and architecture, and their interrelation with contemporary performance practices. In order to address issues, such as the existence of ruined spaces within the city, the transformation of built spaces, and the function of re-purposed buildings, I chose four case studies that are all, at present, in a state of flux. Firstly, the derelict 21 Wapping Lane warehouse that hosted Punchdunk's *Faust* (2006-2007) was demolished three years after the performance in order to give way to a high-density construction. Secondly, the area in Wapping where the audio-walk *Wapping:audio* took place is one of the areas of London that have accepted an extensive transformation since the end of the previous century. Thirdly, Salcedo's artwork *Shibboleth* (2007-2008) took place in Tate Modern, which has been the product of the transformation of the Bankside Power Station, and the extension of which towards the south has been initiated. And lastly, I focus on the exterior architecture of Britain's National Theatre building for which redevelopment plans are underway.

In the case studies examined, I have proposed an investigation of space through performance practices and performative concepts. Looking at city-spaces through performance allowed me to consider the function of buildings beyond their architectural or urban analysis, and to imagine how built space can be considered, experienced and envisioned otherwise. The way that the material qualities of built spaces and their structural composition perform within the city, I suggest, offer us a new way of imagining and creating spaces. Since the sites examined are in a moment of change, the idea of the unfinished-ness of space, of space always being in-process, becomes evident. Seeing space as unfinished and always under construction has enabled me to think of who and which processes are involved in the production of space, how space is conceptualised, produced and performed. Through the sites and practices discussed in the thesis, I have examined the ways in which space becomes open-ended, not only in conceptual but also in practical terms, and how a performance event can potentially change our thinking and involvement in the production of urban space. In addition, the unfinished-ness of space emphasises the always-present, but often overlooked, interconnectedness of space with time. By looking at the sites' past and present history, as well as their possible future, I have demonstrated how concepts

and practices embedded in these spaces have changed over time. The significant relation between space and time sheds light upon the creative uses of space, as well as the contingency and indeterminacy of it. I have examined the effects of time on the built sites by looking at those that had been derelict, or show signs of dereliction, as derelict sites exemplify the impermanence of built space and its re-shaping through time.

Specifically, in Chapter 2, I have examined how the performance of *Faust* has challenged prevailing conceptions about buildings' dereliction. Focusing on the fact that the performance took place in a derelict building, I have examined the way that governmental bodies and urban planners consider derelict sites and how their views often negate the significance and alternative uses of ruined spaces. In order to exemplify the degree to which *Faust* functioned not only as an alternative performance practice but also as an urban act, I have found it necessary to examine the interlinking of site and location. Thus, I have examined the history of reconstruction in Wapping and the 21 Wapping Lane building's characteristics. The extensive transformation of Docklands since the 1980s has greatly altered the urban character of the area and its function, and it is within this change that the proposed plans for the 21 Wapping Lane site have been produced. The strategic location of the site and the years of building's abandonment were significant parameters for the demolition of the warehouse and the initiation of new ambitious residential constructions within the site. My argument consists of two parts; first, I advocate that derelict spaces are important to urban spatial meaning. Second, that *Faust*'s temporary use of the derelict space of 21 Wapping Lane site was spatially significant in the transformation of that part of London. Certainly, the fact that the performance was co-funded by the property development company, Ballymore Properties Ltd, which is responsible for the new plans in the 21 Wapping Lane, makes the case complex. Performances, like *Faust*, can be viewed as an alternative way of planning and developing a derelict site, but can also be considered as a way of preparing the site for a profit-driven development. Without ignoring the fact that *Faust* could well be considered as part of property development company's transactional strategy, I suggest that it was a significant case that exemplified how a supposedly useless building is enlivened. The case of the performance of *Faust* provides a productive way of thinking of urban dereliction and alternative uses of derelict buildings and can open up approaches to planning, designing and using space.

In Chapter 3, I expand on my study about the experience of the Wapping area, its architecture and its spatial history. This chapter has been engaged with the analysis of *Wapping:audio* walk and how this challenges established modes of representation of space and priorities that govern city-spaces and particularly the city's streets. The geographical closeness to the first case study (the journey of the *Wapping:audio* ends opposite the 21 Wapping Lane site) has contributed to a deeper understanding of the area and its past, present and future spatial practices. In this chapter, I have considered that the *Wapping:audio* is a creative response to city-spaces, both in terms of the artistic production of it and in terms of the audiences' experiences of it. The argument of the discussion is that the meaning of space is performatively produced through experiencing the city on foot, and that *Wapping:audio* draws audiences' attention to this. Apart from the fact that built space becomes the inspiration of creating the route of the walk, the built space also becomes the main focus and the medium through which the audience experience the audio-walk. Through their journey, the audience compose and decompose the spatial elements encountered and create an alternative urban architecture. The buildings' materiality becomes a manifestation of spatial stories that triggers the imagination. I have also examined the relationship between walking and urban planning, in order to emphasise the importance of experiencing the city on foot and the value of audio-walks towards this direction.

Chapter 4 moves south of the River Thames and examines the converted building of Tate Modern. In this chapter, I have critiqued the decisions taken in relation to the leftover and weathered materials of the former Bankside Power Station. I have specifically focused on the meaning of dirt in relation to architecture, and I have analysed how it has been associated with concepts of modern architecture, such as order and functionality, which have continued to prevail. Dirt entails notions of ambivalence and ambiguity, and it is because of this that I considered dirt as a source of creativity. In order to exemplify how the architectural approach of Tate Modern has complied with notions that discard dirt from architecture, I have looked at Doris Salcedo's *Shibboleth*. *Shibboleth* directly interned in the smooth and polished floor of Tate Modern's Turbine Hall making, in a sense, the space dirty. By this I mean that the artwork shook Tate Modern's order that derives from its organisation and design of its spaces. I have argued that the architectural strategy followed in the conversion of the Bankside Power Station, especially in the interior, did not fully explore the building's potential, since it implemented modernist concepts related to orderliness

and the cleanliness of space. And I have also argued that *Shibboleth* has questioned Tate Modern's materiality and has brought associations with the building's past derelict state. The findings of the discussion of Tate Modern's architectural strategy can constitute a way of reflecting on the spaces that will be created when the redevelopment plans for Tate Modern's extension have been completed. On July 2012, the subterranean spaces beneath the old Bankside Power Station opened to the public. In the initial plan, the extension of Tate Modern was expected to have been completed by the 2012 London Olympics, however, this was not achieved and only the underground chambers were finished on time (see Brown www). My first visit to the Tanks was on 19th July 2012 to attend Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's performance of *Fase: Four Movements to the Music of Steve Reich*. My initial reaction to the foyer area of the Tanks and in the Tanks themselves was to stare at the marks on the walls and to have the desire to touch them. Although the floor and the interior walls of the Tanks have been refurbished, they have kept something from the original rough texture. The Tanks' cylindrical shape and dimensions invite me to imagine their initial function, but also made me think about the powerful dynamic that lies beyond the rectangularity that often rules built spaces. Certainly, the architectural approach followed in the Tanks brings associations to the past use of the building and suggests some new ways of experiencing art space.

In the last chapter I have examined another landmark along the south side of the River, the exterior of the National Theatre' building. For the only theatre building of this thesis, in which however my discussion did not 'enter' its interior spaces, I have examined its architectural design, focusing on its structural elements and geometry, looking at the strata and fly-towers, and its extensive application of concrete. Through analysing the architectural strategies followed in the construction of it by Lasdun and the National Theatre Board, the surrounding area of South Bank, and the redevelopment plans of Haworth and Tompkins, I have traced the meaning that National Theatre's architecture emanates to the city. At the same time, I have examined how performance, diversify, challenge, or enhance the building's architectural concepts. I have investigated how performance practices, art projects and performative concepts emphasise the opportunities of its architecture and contest its limitations. My view consists of two main arguments; first, that performative practices, such as parkour, installation and film projections, that take place at the exterior spaces of the National Theatre, contribute to a challenge its monumentality

and imperviousness, and emphasises its link with theatre practice and with the contemporary cityscape. Second, the weather marks and signs of decline appearing on the building's exterior question the structure's durability and expose its vulnerability, binding the building with time and performance's ephemeral nature. Reflecting on how the building performs at present allowed me to consider the impact of the approved redevelopment plans might have on the building.

At this point, I would like to mention that besides the fact that the four cases studies have been chosen because they offered a rich ground where my arguments could be developed, they have also been chosen because of their proximity to the River Thames and because of their location on either side of it. The River Thames has a particular importance for the development of London (see, for example, Weightman 2004)[133] and especially for the sites examined in this thesis. All the sites investigated emerged because of the river; by this I mean that the existence of the river's water made possible certain activities such as travelling, shipping, transporting, trading which had as a result, for example, the development of docks and, therefore, warehouses such as this of 21 Wapping Lane. At the same time the erection of the Bankside Power Station along the River made easier the uploading of coal coming from the northeast of England which was necessary for the power station's operation. From another perspective Lasdun's appreciation of the River as a physical element within the city that requires contemplation and admiration offered topographical indications of how the National Theatre's building should be orientated, and invited metaphorical associations to the function of the building with the riverscape. The River Thames constitutes a significant feature in London, and this research can further develop its outcomes by examining the role of it as a physical boundary between north and south London in relation to the city's development, and the proposed changes of the specific sites examined.

Each of the spaces examined provided me with a way of analysing spatial concepts, architectural and performance practices and allowed me to exemplify ways in which built environment can be re-imagined. I have sought to establish ways in which the interaction between urban space and performance becomes a creative way of analysing and producing space. Certainly, the examination of urban space is a

[133] For a discussion about the Great Stink of London in 1858 – which was the result of sewers emptied into the River – and the Great Stink of Paris in 1880, see David Barnes's 'Confronting Sensory Crisis in the Great Stinks of London and Paris' (2005).

multifaceted undertaking and it was not possible within this research to portray the entire range of issues related to it. However, by focusing on specific sites, this thesis has unravelled aspects of urban space that are central and critical in the process of producing space. I want to point out that analysing and understanding the specificity of these sites in urban terms should not make these sites be considered as a bounded and closed, but they should be seen as part of a larger process of creating and thinking about spatial systems. The overarching argument that this thesis has sought to establish is that through performance, the use, shape and qualities of urban space can be re-defined in a way that encourages a more participatory, imaginative and open to possibilities urban space.

As we have seen in the Introduction, since the mid-1990s more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas (see Kaplan 2004) and at the same time cities are 'never static, or complete' (see Thrift and Pile 2000). These facts have certainly contributed to intensification of the debates on urban space and cities. The examination of how people live in cities, what social, political and physical structures they encounter and to what extent the urban environment fulfil people's potential and hopes have attracted the attention of scholars among a variety of disciplines, such as geography, architecture, urban studies and performance studies. My research participates in the dialogue across academic fields following an interdisciplinary approach and draws on spatial theories developed by influential theorists, such as Massey, Harvey, Lefebvre and Thrift, who have significantly contributed to the reshaping of spatial concepts and have suggested new ways of understanding and analysing space. As it would not be possible to respond to the great volume of their influential work, I have focused on particular aspects of their work. Thus, their ideas, for example, about space as an open-ended process, space as a social product, non-representational space, and space-time relationships, have provided me with not only the starting points but also the theoretical framework for considering the interrelationship between urban space and performance.

There are two points that I want to make that I consider are of central importance within this thesis, since in them lies my contribution to a new way of analysing urban and performance space. First, I have followed an applied methodology with respect to the theoretical ideas of spatial thinkers such as those aforementioned, and I have examined how spatial concepts can be exercised on the four particular built spaces and, at the same time, how these concepts can be expanded through the notions of

performance and performativity. Thus, I intend to show how spatial meanings are performatively produced. Second, since I consider that buildings are not merely objects, and specifically static objects that claim endurance and rigidity, but are products of social life and interaction that are experienced and interpreted from the ground, my methodology also entailed the visiting and re-visiting of the sites. My aim has been to establish a way of analysing space through theory, but also through a kind of fieldwork, by visiting the sites beyond the specific performance events I have analysed in the thesis, and documenting my observations and experiences. This has allowed me to understand spatial processes and generate spatial knowledge from the ground.

Throughout the thesis I have injected the discussion with my own engagement and experience of the built spaces I encountered. However, this could (and should) be more extensively followed in my writing in future research, positioning (to use a spatial term) myself within my writing. Within this I suggest that acknowledging my gender, for example, could open up a range of important issues that play a significant role in analysing and understanding space. Discussing the sites examined, explicitly through my own feminine perspective, could form part of the spatial knowledge. It could show how gender operates to organise, design and use space, and how space produces gender relations. Space is not a gender-neutral concept and neither are the practices it entails (see Colomina 1992 and Rendell et al. 2000). Since gender is socially and culturally constructed (see Butler 1990), and since space articulates social and cultural values, it becomes evident that space plays a central role in how gender relations are constructed, maintained, or changed. Massey says that 'spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood' (Massey 1994: 179). The role of gender in producing and experiencing space can disclose new ways of thinking about city-spaces, architectural production and subjectivity.

The hesitation of positioning myself through my spatial experiences and also involving to a larger extent my personal responses throughout the thesis and write in the first person lies, in part, within the wider relationship between practice and theory that has been proved challenging within academic studies. Reflecting on this binary opposition within the field of performance studies Dwight Conquergood explains that the way that knowledge is organised in the academy mainly supporting 'a distance perspective' rather than 'a view from ground level, in the thick of things':

> The dominant way of knowing in the academy is that of empirical observation and critical analysis from a distanced perspective: "knowing that," and "knowing about." This is a view from above the object of inquiry: knowledge that is anchored in paradigm and secured in print. This propositonal knowledge is shadowed by another way of knowing that is grounded in active, intimate, hands-on participation and personal connection: "knowing how," and "knowing who." This is a view from ground level, in the thick of things. (Conquergood 2004: 312)

Also, another point that I would like to make which would have possibly advanced the 'site-specificity' of the thesis is the acknowledgement of the page itself as space and writing as architectural composition. This could further contribute to develop a move from architecture to *archi-ecriture*.[134] Since such experiments are largely missing in academic writing – certainly Academic Regulations for Research Degrees do not encourage deviation from standard academic writing – possibly, we could look to literature and borrow some of its imaginative, experimental ways of constructing an alternative architecture on the page.

Here I am quoting from Georges Perec's 'Species of Spaces / Espèces d'espaces' written in 1974 where he simply and clearly states the relationship between words and space:

> This is how space begins, with words only, signs traced on the blank page. To describe space: to name it, to trace it, like those portolano-makers who saturated the coastlines with the names of harbours, the names of inlets, until in the end the land was only separated from the sea by a continuous ribbon of text. (Perec 2008: 13)

And in the following page I present an excerpt (Perec 2008: 11) showing how Perec 'inhabits' his sheet of paper, playing with it and challenging its borders:

[134] I am grateful to my thesis's Examiner Dr Carl Lavery for this proposition.

I write: I inhabit my sheet of paper, I invest it, I travel across it.

I incite *blanks, spaces* (jumps in the meaning: discontinuities, transitions, changes of key)

I write
in the
margins

I start a new

paragraph. I refer to a footnote[1]

I go to a new sheet of paper.

[1] I am very fond of footnotes at the bottom of the page, even if I don't have anything in particular to clarify there.

Furthermore, the present study can expand its focus by looking at more explicitly interventionist movements within the urban setting, for example, the recent movement of occupying streets and squares within city centres that aim to contest the detriments of capitalism to social life. Another area of analysis that may be pursued following this thesis is the discussion about future theatre buildings. If we thoroughly consider the changes that take place in relation to theatre practice, then we may be more prepared to suggest what kind of built structures are needed for theatre praxis and consider the importance of where these should be situated within the city. Performance space influences and is influenced by performance-making processes, as Hannah claims: 'new spaces bring about new performance-makers and that new performance genres influence new spaces' (Hannah and Horešovská www). Thus, new theatre spaces will be followed by new dramaturgical compositions, new play writing and acting techniques that correspond to a contemporary theatre audience.

Concluding this thesis, I would like to make a reference to Harvey's 'The Right to the City', where he asserts that '[t]he right to the city is not merely a right of access to what already exists, but the right to change it after our heart's desire' (2004: 236). Harvey emphasises the role of imagination and desire for organising and changing our world. Drawing on Marx, he says that '[w]hat separates the worst of architect from the best of the bees […] is that the architect erects a structure in the imagination before materializing it upon the ground' (2004: 237). And he goes further suggesting that '[w]e are, all of us, architects, of a sort. We collectively make the city through out daily actions and our political, intellectual and economic engagements. But, in turn, the city makes us' (2004: 237). Two significant points that derive from Harvey's claim need to be thoroughly considered if we want a more democratic urban space. First, that city is produced from all of us, collectively; and second, that the city creates us. And if the city does not make us the kind of human we desire, then, how can we alter it? To what extent does the city provide spaces that we desire to be and live? If we are all architects, what spaces do we dream of? How do we want to use them? How can we think more broadly and openly about their appearance, construction and function? As Harvey says: '[i]f our urban world has been imagined and made then it can be re-imagined and re-made. The inalienable right to the city is worth fighting for' (2004: 239).

Recently, I had the chance to attend Massey and Harvey's talks in which both of the academics emphasised the power of space in social, economic and political terms and confirmed the necessity of re-thinking urban spaces.[135] They pointed out the need to acknowledge our personal involvement in the production of space, and to think spatiality and temporality in order to organise our world differently and confront the issues emerge from globalisation and a capitalist driven economy. As Harvey emphasised, capitalism has destroyed cities socially, environmentally and politically, and if we want an alternative, if we want to create another way of living and being a human, we need to transform urban life. For this we need to think how we can re-design the city, how time and space is constructed around us, and how this can change. Harvey sees the city as what people have in common; and thus it is the ground where we can initiate transforming our lives. If we want to alter our lives, the ways that urban space is produced and lived, then we should think about what Lefebvre claimed almost half a century ago and which is now more crucial than ever: '[t]o change life, however, we must first change space' (1991: 190). I consider that the proposal that comes out of my research work; that is, to re-define urban space through performance also suggests the possibility of innovative ways of thinking of city-spaces and their stories-to-come.

[135] In March 2012, Massey gave a talk in the event titled 'New Maps for an Island Planet' (see OpenSpace Research Centre www) organised by the ATLAS – a forum for discussion about ethical and political issues raised in relation to globalisation (ATLAS www) – that took place at Queen Elizabeth Hall. Harvey's talk took place in the event 'Spaces of Transformation: The Last Space-Time of Revolutions Becoming', in May 2012. It was part of the series of talks and lectures titled 'Topology' organised by Tate Modern (Tate Modern www). His talk can be viewed on: <www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/topology-vast-space-time-revolutions-becoming-part-3> (accessed 5/6/2012).

Appendix

List of Illustrations

All the pictures have been taken by the author C. Marini.

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Illustrations – Chapter 5

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Fig. 2.3 The rear side of the warehouse, view from Wapping Lane. Part of the wall that has been preserved after the demolition of the warehouse can be viewed at the bottom (Oct. 2009)

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Fig. 3.1 Wapping High Street – the *Wapping:audio* begins outside Wapping Underground Station

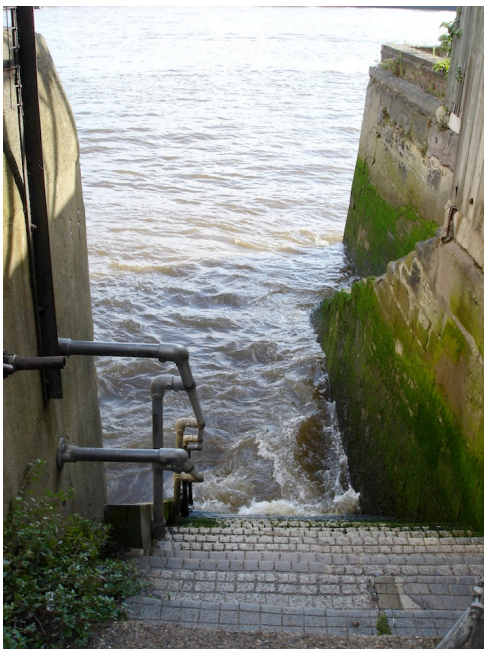

Fig. 3.2 Steps leading to the River Thames

Fig. 3.3 Plants overgrow around the only remnant of a schoolyard

Fig. 3.4 A fenced land used as a car park

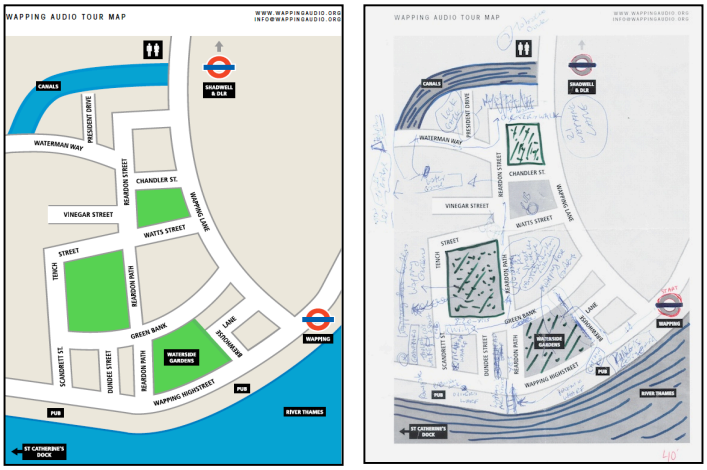

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Fig. 3.10 Cobbles on Wapping High Street abruptly stop, and they are replaced by tarmac

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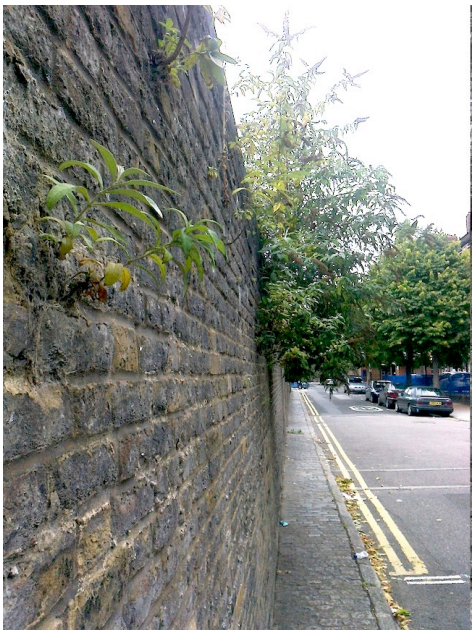

Fig. 3.12 Brick wall overgrown with foliage – Readon Street

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Fig. 3.14 Wapping Rose Gardens

Fig. 3.15 Overgrown land adjacent to Wapping Rose Gardens

Fig. 3.16 A disused mooring post

Fig. 3.17 A life-buoy and a bench behind protective iron railings

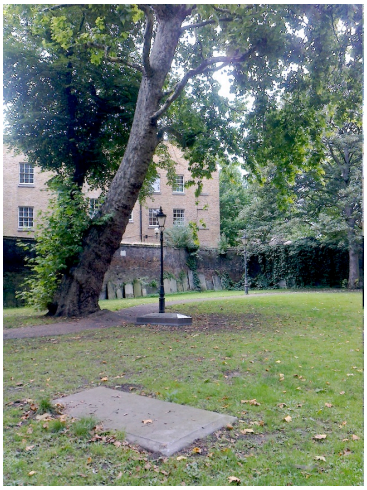

Fig. 3.18 The cemetery at Scandrett Street and Wapping High Street

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Fig. 4.2 Tate Modern's rear side (Nov. 2007) before the initiation of its redevelopment

Fig. 4.3 Tate Modern's expansion towards the south is underway (July 2010)

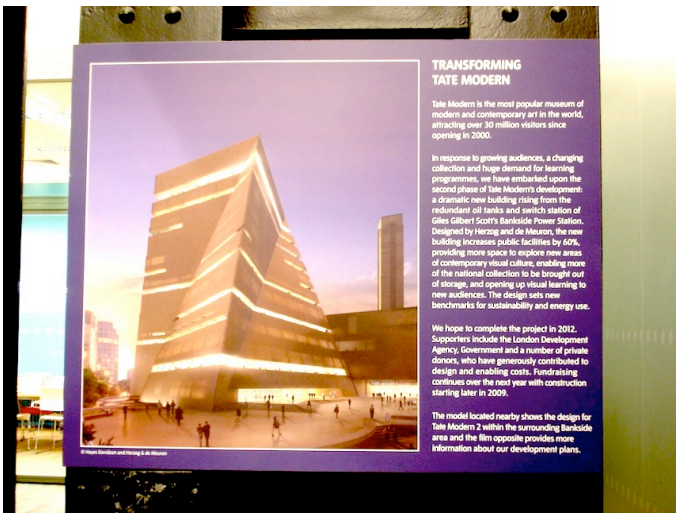

Fig. 4.4 The signboard inside Tate Modern displays the new plans for its redevelopment

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Fig. 4.7 Detail of Tate Modern's long windows

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Fig. 4.9 Discoloured bricks – north side

Fig. 4.10 Discoloured bricks – west side

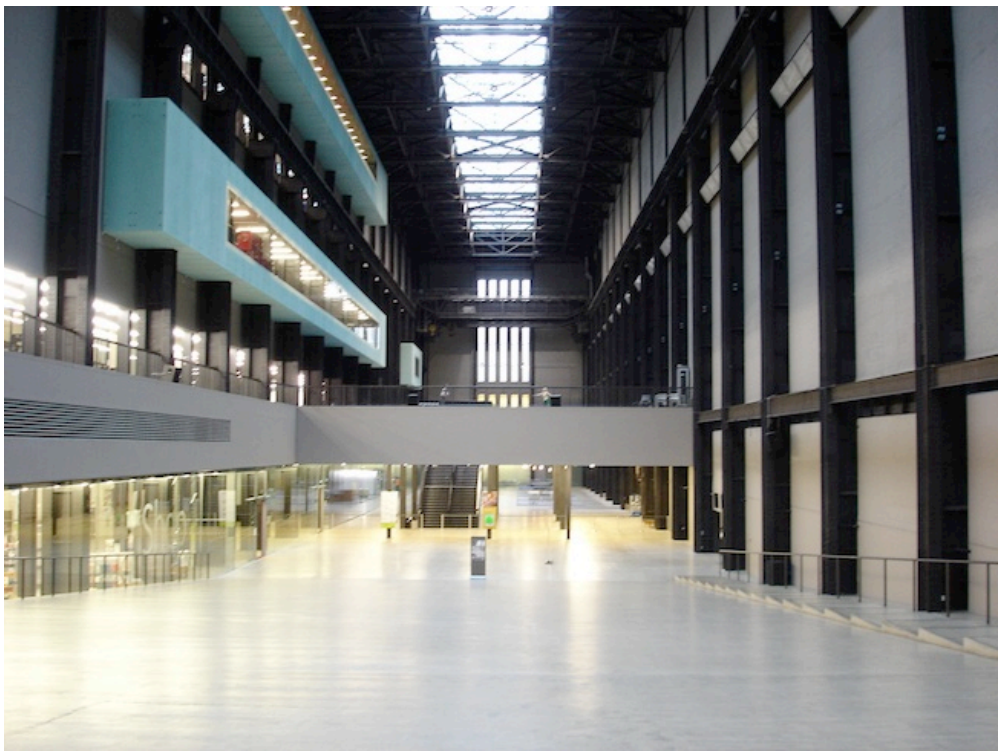

Fig. 4.11 The Turbine Hall – the bridge platform, which splits the hall into two, and the glass panels along the roof function as remnants of the old Bankside Power Station

Fig. 4.12 The slit-like opening of the main entrance – west side

Fig. 4.13 Sunlight through the window gives a dramatic tone at the main entrance

Fig. 4.14 The lit bay windows between the Turbine Hall and the galleries

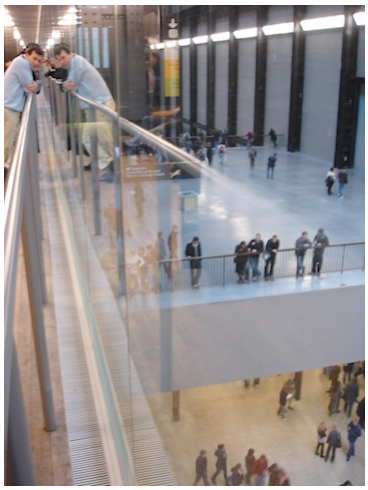

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Fig. 4.18 The Millennium Bridge and St Paul's cathedral – view from the East Room

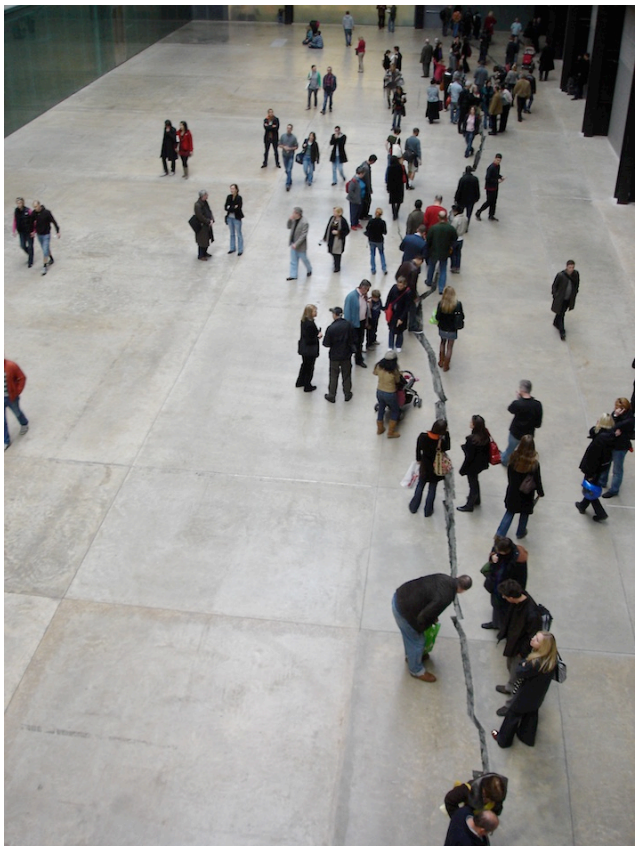

Fig. 4.20 Visitors gathered along the fissure

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Fig. 5.14 The rear of the National Theatre – the Dock Door on Upper Ground is used for moving in and out materials or scenographic items

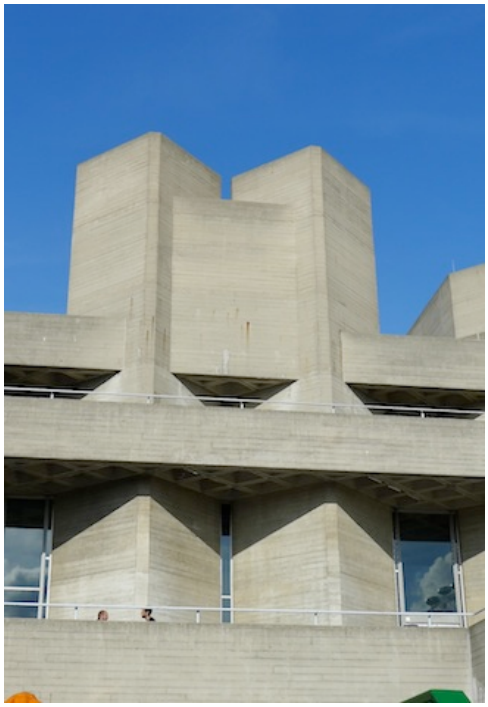

Fig. 5.15 The concrete exterior of the west side reflects the sunlight

Fig. 5.16 The ‘anchor’ staircase is dappled with sunlight

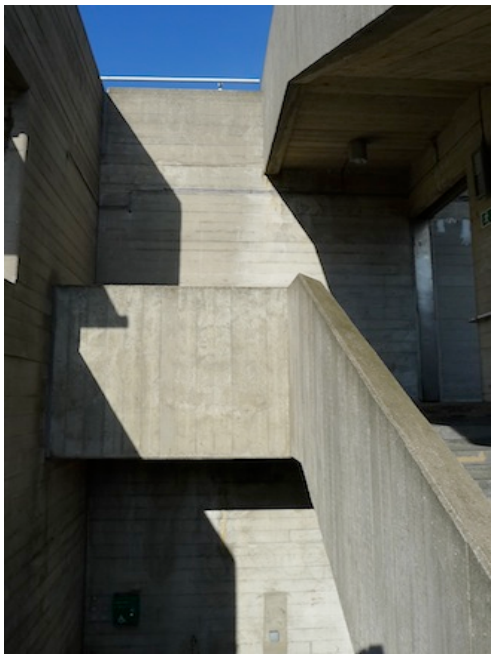

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Fig. 5.22 The exterior's weathering was anticipated by Lasdun who saw this as a process of unifying the building with the riverscape

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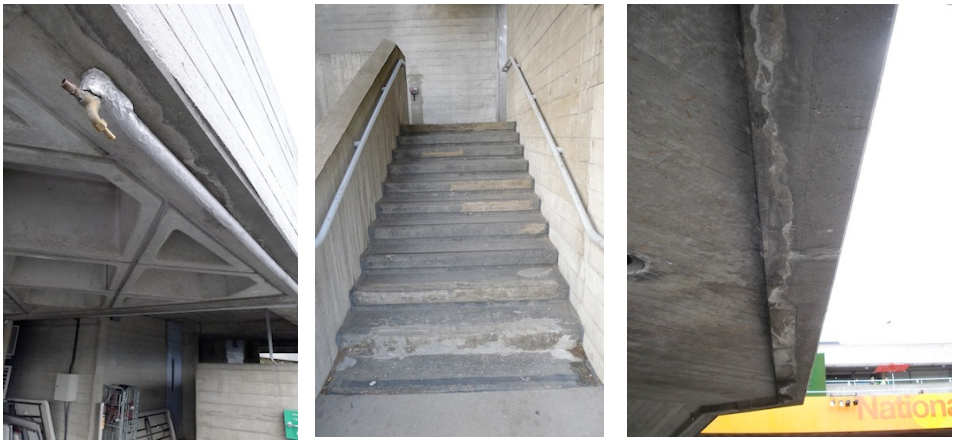

Fig. 5.24 Marks on the concrete exterior – details

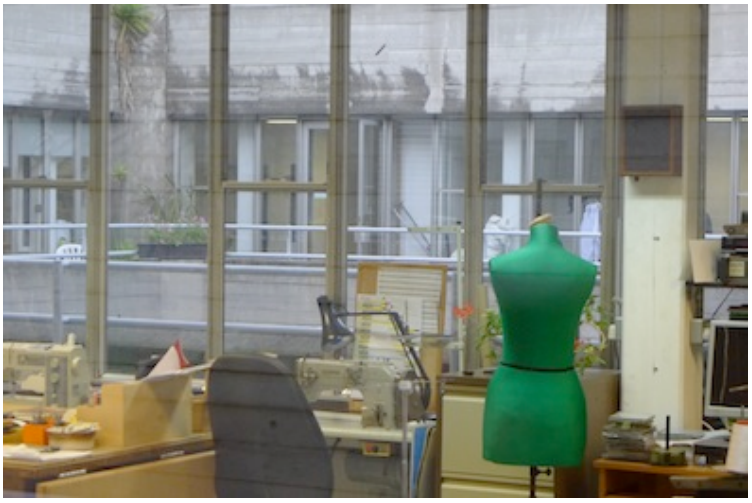

Fig. 5.25 Concrete's weathering is highly evident in the Dressing Rooms' inner courtyard – view from the Wardrobe room

Fig. 5.26 The Lyttelton's flytower has been 'attacked' by graffiti artists (March 2011)

Fig. 5.27 Graffiti on the walls of the 'anchor' staircase (July 2010)

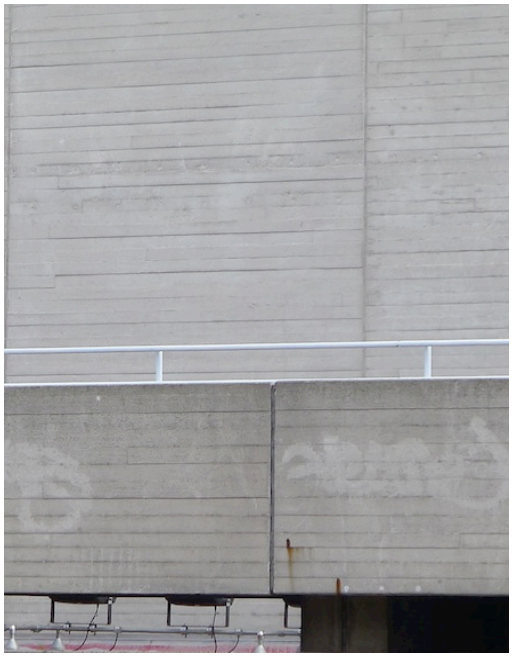

Fig. 5.28 The cleaning process can damage the concrete

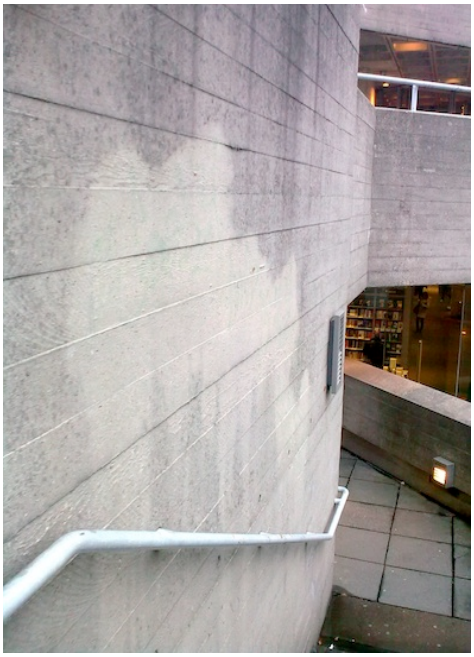

Fig. 5.29 Marks after the removal of graffiti

Fig. 5.30 The twofold escape staircase at the north side divides the building's design – diagrid soffits (on the right) are replaced by concrete beams (on the left)

Fig. 5.31 The entrance of the Cottesloe Theatre

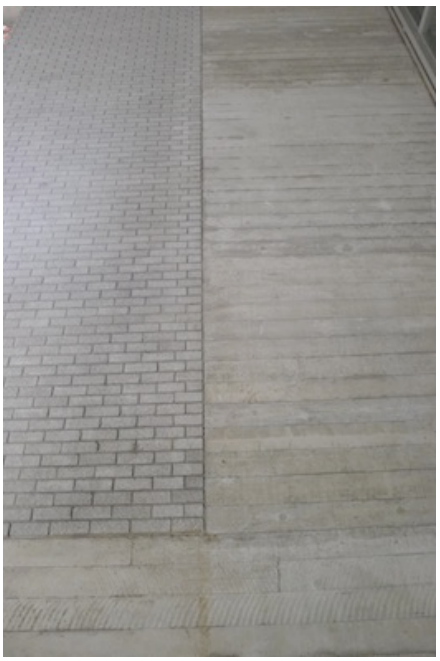

Fig. 5.32 The junction of the brick wall and the board-marked concrete outside the Cottesloe Theatre - detail

Fig. 5.33 Baylis Terrace

Fig. 5.34 People gathered on Lasdun's strata

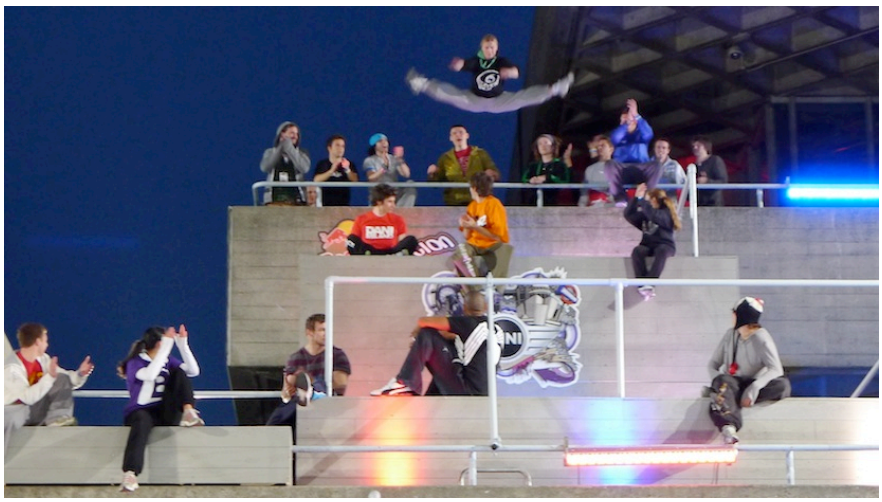

Fig. 5.35 The National Theatre's strata used by free runners (March 2011)

Fig. 5.36 Audience surrounds the National Theatre (March 2011)

Fig. 5.37 Audience on the steps of Waterloo Bridge

Fig. 5.38 Theatre Square during summer – *Watch This Space*

Fig. 5.39 *Watch This Space* (July 2010)

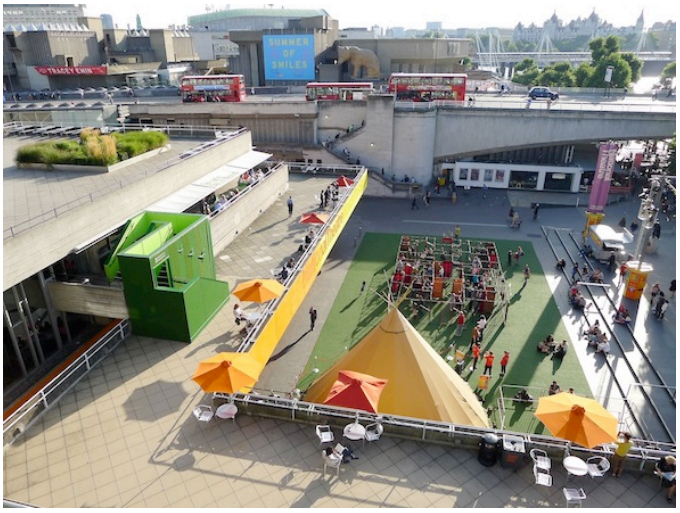

Fig. 5.40 *Watch This Space* (July 2011)

Fig. 5.41 ‘Armachair Theatre’ is placed at the north-east side where *Square2* usually takes place (July 2011)

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Fig. 5.43 Lighting re-introduces Olivier and Lyttelton's fly-towers during night (April 2009)

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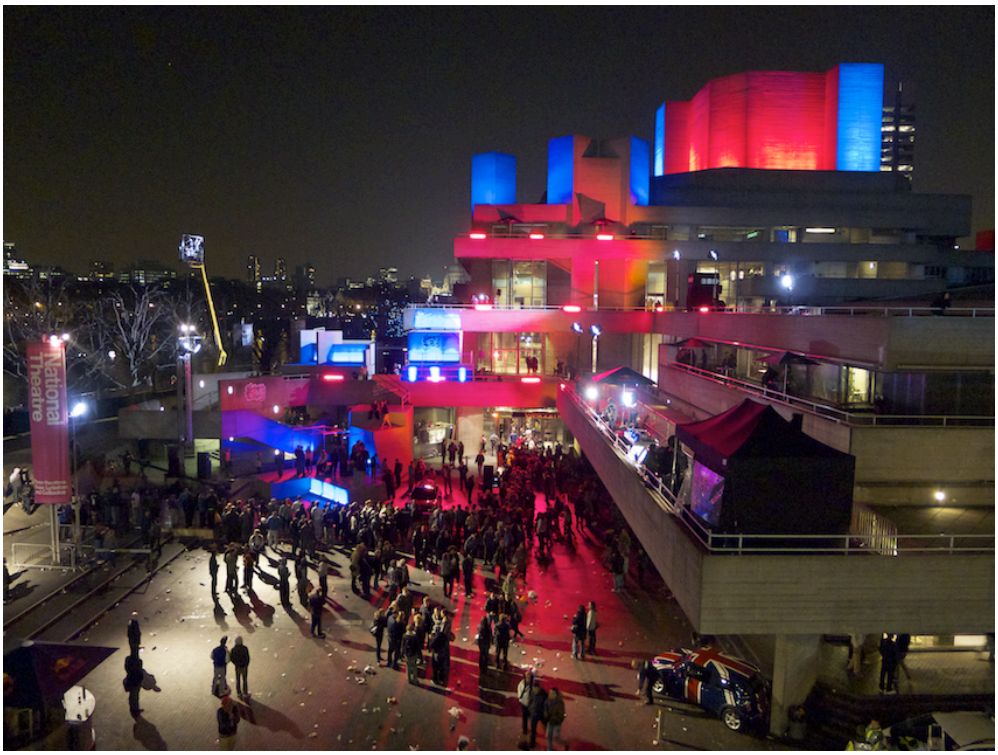

Fig. 5.45 Exterior lighting increases the building's permeability

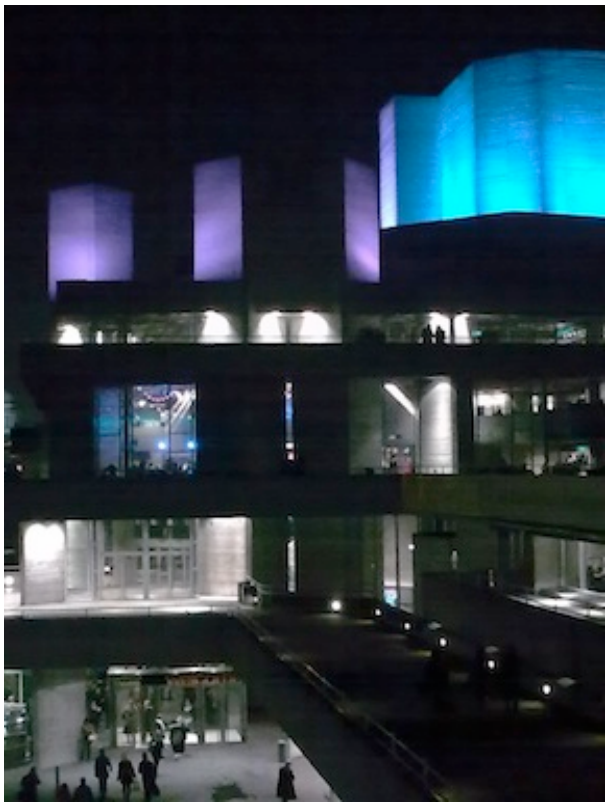

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Fig. 5.47 Olivier's fly-tower surface functions as a video screen (July 2010)

Fig. 5.48 Baylis Terrace is transformed into an open-air cinema (July 2010)

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